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The Australian WOMEN'S WEEKLY

DECEMBER 2, 1953 — Vol. 21, No. 27

BUSHFIRES—AND YOU

THE summer holiday season will soon be at its peak.

The thought conjures up pictures of brown bodies, golden sands, foaming surf, the cool pools of coastal rivers.

But how quickly the picture can change.

A dancing tongue of flame licks the scrub or grass and races towards camps or houses.

A cigarette butt thrown from a car or train sends a willy-willy of fire across paddocks, through timbered country.

Property is engulfed, life is threatened, may be lost.

Whose match started the fire, whose cigarette butt was to blame?

Over-dramatic? Certainly not. Vast areas of Australia will be sunburnt dry as tinder during this summer as thousands of miles of country are gripped by drought.

Make sure you won't have to answer "mine" to either of these questions.

Be meticulous about putting out butts and matches, not lighting fires in the open, and not burning off in dry weather.

Volunteer fire brigades do a splendid job. Have you thought of joining one?

If your camp, holiday house, or home could be threatened by fire, do you talk over the situation with your neighbors and make tentative plans?

If the water supply is poor, do you make sure there are some handy heaps of sand or earth which will smother the beginnings of any fire that may start?

These are obvious precautions, but observing them could prevent a disaster.

Our cover:

● During the N.S.W. tennis championships at White City, Rushcutters' Bay, Sydney, there has been a spectator who has raised just as much interest as the players on the courts. She is the former Miss Utah, now Shauna Trabert, wife of U.S. tennis star Tony Trabert, and this week's adornment of our cover. Shauna is a tall, hazel-eyed brunette with a flair for wearing clothes that has led her along the path of a successful modelling career back home in the States. Not surprisingly, as she is a fine athlete and married a tennis champ, she is particularly interested in sports clothes. She doesn't like frills and furbelows. "I prefer simple cocktail dresses, suits and sweaters," she told us. There is no need to emphasise that either a frill or a furbelow would be superfluous on Mrs. Trabert, lucky girl.

The cover picture was taken by staff photographer Robert Cleland.

Next week:

● In our next issue we publish a special section on Christmas entertainment—the movies and stage productions which will be on show in Australia during the coming holiday season. Our film critic, M. J. McMahon, has chosen several outstanding films which are scheduled for release soon, and among these selections from which we show scenes in color are Walt Disney's version of "Peter Pan," the screen transcription of the famous New York musical "Kiss Me Kate," and "Mogambo." On the theatrical front there are the evergreen pantomime attractions "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Aladdin," and "Mother Goose." These, too, are in color.

● Our free, lift-out novel next week is Winifred Watson's brilliantly witty story "Miss Pettigrew Lives For a Day," which deals with 24 riotous hours in the life of an apparently prim, middle-aged spinster, who strays into the house of a notorious lady. The lady, who is a nightclub singer, has a complicated love life and Miss Pettigrew sets herself the task of simplifying it. The results are extraordinary and most entertaining.

Fine Australian books for the Christmas list

Book review by AINSLIE BAKER

LACHLAN MACQUARIE, who succeeded Bligh as Governor of N.S.W. in 1810 and held office until 1821, was one of the most complex and fascinating characters of Australian history.

In his scholarly work "The Captain's General" B. H. Travers presents a new picture of this controversial Highlander.

Macquarie's dual nature is clearly drawn. On the one hand he is shown as the nabob, the officer who liked style and pomp, "who had made the most of privilege and opportunity to increase his personal fortune."

On the other, he appears as the humanitarian, the social reformer, who had been in New South Wales only four months, "when he expounded the theory of emancipation which was to change the whole purpose of the penal colony . . ."

Emancipation meant that the rights of free settlers were extended to reformed convicts.

Macquarie has been attacked on the grounds of materialism, lack of statesmanship, and for being an autocrat. The governor who emerges from this fine and detailed study is a despot, but he is, at least, benevolent.

For, the author argues, "An autocrat does not fight for settlers' rights against the powerful Colonial Office, does not found churches of a secretary nature, and does not issue patriarchal proclamation urging the colonists to greater achievements. Nor does an autocrat ever get pushed into a corner, the only way out of which is by resigning!"

Macquarie thought of the colony in terms of nationhood. He introduced the tradition of celebrating Anniversary Day, now called Australia Day, and was one of the first to use the name Australia for this country. He also fostered the now national sports, racing and cricket.

AUSTRALIA'S leading authority on slang, Sidney J. Baker (no relation to the reviewer), has written another of his entertaining books on the popular language of Australia.

"Australia Speaks" is a supplement to the author's previous study, "The Australian Language."

"I am personally persuaded," he says, "that Australia is at least the equal of America in its capacity to invent new words or to put old words to new uses."

This comprehensive study of popular Australian embraces such colorful specialities as "Racehorse Names," "Underworld," "Flora and Fauna," "Provincial Provincialisms," and "The Children."

Incidentally, "Australia Speaks" is most definitely not for the children—though its chapters on the correct pronunciation of place names, rare Australianisms, and the outback promise hours of absorbing reading for the adult family.

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Virtue is its own reward

A short story by WALT GROVE

GUS MONCIWEICZ and I are a well-known team. We write scenarios together. I'm the one who puts the actual words down on paper and so forth, but it's no great trick.

I don't feel that I'm better than Gus is, or anything. He's a very sweet little guy, and the rumor about him that while he was working at Metro he endorsed his cheques with an "X" is definitely not true. He just never got very far in school, that's all.

Gus must weigh all of seven stone. And he's somewhere near fifty-five years old and very skinny, white-haired, and very, very sour. He suffers from several nervous disorders of his body, too.

And now everyone's beginning to say I look like him, because we've collaborated with each other so much. It's a lie. All right, I'm bald on top, and I'm no great big guy; but I'm only thirty-eight years old—honest.

I grew up in Hollywood. But no one outside the industry is aware that I'm Franklin Still's son. That's right. Franklin Still, the big handsome guy who's the male lead in all those Mr. and Mrs. series films about that charming English couple. In those series films Dad is supposed to be forty-two, and he looks it.

Dad is wonderfully preserved for a man of sixty, which is his actual, bona fide age. He should be wonderfully preserved; he's dedicated his life to his body—facials, massages, cold showers, brisk towellings, everything. And I have to admit he's done a wonderful job on himself.

That doesn't mean I don't like my dad; I do. He's not too bright, but he's always been very cordial to me. The only thing is that I don't like to be around him too much any more since I lost my hair on top, because the fact is that I'm beginning to look older than he does when you get me in the wrong kind of light. I like him, but it's embarrassing for me, so I try to keep away from him as much as I can sometimes.

But last August I drove out especially to the valley to see my dad, to tell him goodbye. Gus and I had finished a one-picture deal for Paramount, and we were going East for six months to maybe work on a play, someone wrote, if we could find one.

Dad said he expected to leave shortly himself for the salmon fishing off Nova Scotia, and he promised to look me up and say hello when he came through New York. I honestly never expected to see him. He's always planning some big safari and dashing out to buy a couple of guns or something, but he never actually goes . . .

First thing in New York, Gus and I went to see Vincent Freedman. Twice before we'd worked on his productions. Vincent said as a matter of fact he had taken an option on a thing and had been considering seriously giving us a ring out in Hollywood. So right away Gus started talking money.

"No, I want you boys to see it first," Vincent said to us.

"You mean it's playing?"

"In summer stock. Up in Connecticut. Really, I think you two ought to take a run up. I think you might do something with it. I've read it myself, and it's kind of a New England O'Neill thing, you know. I think it'll go if I can get a name for the lead. It's got an awful lot of snow and brooding in it."

Well, the upshot was, Gus and I took a run up. We hired a car and a chauffeur to drive it, and when we got to the place it was entirely surrounded by green fields.

It was one of those terrible summer theatres in somebody's old barn. I'd always thought it was a gag, you know, about summer theatres being in old barns. But this one was actually in one. And smell!

Well, the theatre, as they called that old barn, was two miles from the village, on the main road, on a hundred-acre-or-so farm belonging to a Mrs. Mona Reynolds. You could see her big palatial house from the barn.

My mouth must have dropped two feet as Dad, in his usual style, went off with the attractive Mrs. Reynolds on his arm.

But the catch was that the Reynolds number had written the play Vincent had sent us to see. And the theatre that was doing it was in her own barn. The whole silly deal was as plain as the nose on your face.

Anyhow, I had a kind of a feeling. Vincent had told us to explain ourselves to the Reynolds number, so after some talking back and forth, I got Gus to walk up that main road to the house.

We rang the bell, and a dame came to the door. She had on pants and a man's shirt, and she had kind of a general dairymaid air about her appearance. "Yes?" she said.

"Vincent sent us," Gus said. "This is

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The Frightened Wife

YOUNG lawyer WADE FORSYTHE, working desperately to clear ANNE COLLIER, who is in hospital accused of shooting her husband, FRED, dead and attempting to shoot herself, becomes involved in surprising and incriminating incidents.

Unknown to her husband, Anne had been writing radio scripts to earn money for her small son, BILLY, and had instructed her agent, MARTHA SIMMONS, to deposit the money for her in the name of Jessica Blake. Forsythe is dismayed to learn from ELIZA WARRINGTON, Anne's aunt, with whom Billy was living, that Collier had taken him away, so the child is missing.

Forsythe brings Miss Warrington to stay with his sister, MARGERY. He also tries to pick up information from Martha Simmons, and, at Anne's apartment, from the caretaker, MIKE HELLINGER, and other tenants, KERR and JAMISON, undeterred by the fact that he has now roused the suspicions of LIEUTENANT CLOSE, homicide officer on the case, against himself.

On a Sunday evening, Forsythe goes to Martha Simmons' office, but finds her dead on the floor. NOW READ ON:

Concluding our mystery serial



As he knelt beside the body of Martha Simmons, Forsythe failed to hear the cleaning woman behind him. He did not know she was there until she ran out screaming, her eyes wild, her mouth wide open. When he looked up he was dimly aware of other cleaning women crowding in the doorway, and someone behind them yelling for the police.

He was still stunned. She had been very recently killed. He was no judge of such matters, but her body was warm, and as he picked up her hand to try to find a pulse the arm was limp. That she had been strangled, however, was clear; the still, cyanotic face told its own story. And it took only a moment to feel the thin steel cable around her neck.

The men from the squad car were highly suspicious when they came. They hunted away the crowd, closed the door, and stood over Forsythe, making him tell his story over and over—that he had wanted to see the dead woman on a client's business, that her landlady had sent him there, and so on. Nor were things improved when the Homicide men arrived. They brought in the cleaning woman, who pointed a finger at Forsythe and wailed hysterically.

"He did it!" she cried. "I was suspicious of him right away! He had time, too! I cleaned next door, then I thought I'd better see what he was up to!"

But Forsythe's fighting blood was up by that time. "I want Lieutenant Close and I want him fast!" he demanded furiously. "He would know why I'm here. I never touched her, of course. And will somebody look in the files over there for some bank deposit receipts or anything under the name of Blake? Jessica Blake?"

Someone did. There was no file of bank deposit receipts made out to one Jessica Blake. Nor to Anne Collier, either. They eyed him coldly and the anonymous man who had followed him all day spoke quietly to the officer in charge.

"Hold him," he said. "It's the break Lieutenant Close has been waiting for. He's in this up to his neck."

Close had not appeared when they took Forsythe to the precinct station house. For a time they kept him there, under guard in a small room. He was apparently not under arrest. He was merely being detained for questioning. But it was two o'clock in the morning before Close appeared, dismissed the guard, and sat down behind the desk.

He looked tired to the point of exhaustion, and he was coldly angry.

"First of all," he said, "why didn't you tell me the boy had been in the Collier apartment?"

Forsythe stared. "I don't understand. When was he there?"

"Don't give me that. I've had a man tailing you. You went to the place today, and up to the Collier apartment. Don't bother to deny it, Forsythe. We've had the lab. men up there tonight. Your prints are all over the boy's room."

"I was there. I'm not denying it."

"All right. Now get this: One of the men has an allergy about cats. He started sneezing in the boy's room, and what do you think we picked up with the vacuum? Hairs from a cat. A blue-grey Persian cat. The Colliers didn't have a cat, but the kid's aunt did. So he was there, and you knew it."

He drew a long breath. "See here, Forsythe, I don't get any of this unless you killed Collier yourself, and after the Simmons woman tonight I think maybe you did. You had a fight with him. Remember?"

"What's that got to do with it?"

Close leaned forward on the desk.

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By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

"Let me tell you how this thing shapes up," he said. "You're in love with Anne Collier. That sticks out a mile, and Collier's no good. So you shoot him, and by accident you hit her too. But something happens you didn't expect. The boy's there and sees you. He has to be taken away. What's more, you have to be sure he's left nothing behind to show he'd been there. That's why you went back today to smooth up his bed. She'd turned it down for him."

Forsythe managed a wry grin. "Why don't you ask Hellinger about that?" he said. "And aren't you forgetting something? I put a piece of wire on the stairs so Anne would fall and break her neck. I suppose that's love!"

"Maybe it was meant for Collier. Where's that wire now, Forsythe?"

"In a pocket of one of my coats. I'd be doubtful about it, but my sister doesn't send my clothes to be pressed until Tuesday. I suppose you realise, Close, that everything you've said about me can apply to someone else. What you don't want to admit is that there's a killer loose, and you have no idea who it is. For my choice it's Hellinger."

"What about Mike Hellinger?" Close asked sharply.

"I found him in the boy's room when I went there. He was scared. He was after something."

"So were you, weren't you?"

Forsythe grinned wryly. "I was," he said. "I was after Martha Simmons' address. She'd trailed me to Danbury, for one thing. And remember all this happened after I told her Anne Collier was going to make a will. I don't think Anne was shot by accident. There was a deliberate attempt to murder her. If there was any hanky-panky about the money, she had to be killed."

"What sort of hanky-panky?"

"I wish I knew. But there was. That's why Martha Simmons is dead. She wasn't in it alone. It was—well, it yells of an accomplice. If you want the facts, I thought so when I went to the apartment tonight. It's Sunday, and she's not in the telephone book. In my bumbling way I had an idea Anne Collier would have an address for her. That's what I was looking for. And I found it in a notebook on a shelf in the boy's room."

Gun in hand, Forsythe was suddenly aware of Close, staring down at the man on the floor.

Close got up and paced up and down the room, his head bent. When he stopped, it was to fire a question at Forsythe. "What do you know about Mike Hellinger?"

"Nothing, except his job. Why?"

"Mike's smarter than he makes out," Close said, and sat down on the edge of the desk. "He's a left-over from the war. Couldn't settle down to a real job. Took this one five years ago. It suits him. It's easy. He lives in the basement and does as little as he can. He had a wife once, but she left him. The point is, he and Collier used to be pretty thick."

"Mike mixed up in the used-car business?"

"I don't know. But he's not a bad-looking fellow when he cleans up. Now all along you've been talking about Anne Collier's money, and tonight you had the boys looking for her files in the Simmons woman's office. If Mike knew her and there was some trickery going on, it might make some sort of sense. Suppose he didn't know the kid was there, and the boy saw him? He could have shut him up in that basement apartment of his until he got rid of him."

With excitement, exhaustion, and the fact he had eaten very little since breakfast the day before, Forsythe felt physically sick.

"Get rid of him! How?"

"What do you think? Don't be a fool, Forsythe. We have two murders already. Do you think a third will stop anybody? And let's get some coffee in here. We both need it."

He ordered the coffee, and over it they mulled the problem.

It was about dawn when at last Forsythe got home. Careful as he was Margery heard him and came out, dragging a dressing-gown around her. She motioned him not to speak and followed him into his room.

"I've had a time with Eliza," she said, closing the door. "The police telephoned tonight to know if she had a cat. At first she thought the cat was dead, but it seems all they had was some hair from it. She says Billy's clothes were always covered with cat hairs. Then she broke down. She's sure Collier killed him."

"Someone may have," Forsythe said morosely. "He's still missing."

He did not tell her about Martha Simmons. He went to bed and fell into an exhausted sleep. When she wakened him at ten o'clock, it was to say that Close was downstairs and wanted him to go to the hospital with him. He shaved and dressed quickly, to find Close waiting impatiently in the hall, and a police car at the door.

"She's not worse, is she?"

"She's all right. Why not ask about me? I had two hours' sleep in my office chair. I've had a doughnut and a cup of coffee since noon yesterday, and my wife's threatening to divorce me. See here, Forsythe, we've got to tell Mrs. Collier about the boy. Maybe she knows something, and we need everything we can get."

"It will about kill her."

They found Anne distinctly better. She was propped up in bed, her hair loose and brushed, her eyes clear. She was disappointed, however, when only the two of them came in.

"I thought you might bring Billy," she said. "I'm well enough to see him, and he won't understand if I don't."

"Time enough for that later," Close said, to Forsythe's relief. "Just now I want the details of that night, Mrs. Collier. Just why did your husband get the boy and bring him home?"

She hesitated. "I suppose it's all right

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She knew the magic was gone—the dream belonged to the joyous springtime of youth.

The Paris Money

By LEE RUSSELL

MARIAN was tall and slender, with crisp brownish hair and clear grey eyes. Today was her thirty-fourth birthday. With Tim off at his office and the children in junior high, she got out her account book and began by recording, under Paris Fund, the not yet sufficient, but astonishing, sum of one thousand and thirty dollars.

Once she had saved a hundred dollars towards a trip to Paris, but it had gone into a wedding dress. After that there had been no fund until 1946, but then she had started putting three dollars a week into an empty cheese box.

Tim had kidded her about keeping the money in the refrigerator, making bad jokes about "cold cash" and "frozen assets" and threatening to make himself twenty-dollar-bill sandwiches.

But when the amount reached five hundred dollars, he had started to warn her about their weekends at the cottage, her going for groceries without locking the doors, and the possibilities of the house burning down.

And so she had deposited that five hundred in an account separate from their regular savings, and had begun to fill the cheese box again. Tim had given up then and christened the refrigerator cache Marian's Folly.

This morning when she went to the refrigerator, she held on to the open door, feeling the May sunshine warm on her back, and stared at the empty box. The money was gone.

It had been there Friday, but they had spent the weekend at the cottage, and yesterday Marian had gone shopping, leaving both doors of the house unlocked.

Next door, Peg was out sun-baking. Peg, a slim blonde, always had her work done before other people even got started. Marian stepped over the low dividing hedge. "Peg, were you here last weekend? And yesterday?"

"Yes. Right in this chair—most of the time, anyway."

Peg would have seen lights—if prowlers make lights. But she had seen nothing and Marian went back to her kitchen. It was useless to phone the police: unmarked money couldn't be traced. A police investigation would merely spread the tale of Marian's Folly all over town.

Whatever her loss, it was still her birthday and the children expected a cake. She mixed batter. She would tell Tim about the money after they were in bed.

What hurt was that, if the money had to go, it could not have gone for something—new bicycles for the children, the new car Tim wanted. She felt she'd never have the heart to begin again from three dollars. She busied herself cleaning a house that did not need cleaning.

Finally, the children rushed in, and Dorothy insisted on finishing the dinner preparations.

As she bathed, Marian thought forlornly of past birthdays. Tim usually gave jewellery or a compact. The year she had started the Paris Fund again, he had also given her a recording of J'ai Deux Amours.

Beneath Tim's gift was always a white envelope containing a twenty-dollar bill and a note: "Buy something lovely for the lovely girl I love."

She dressed as far as her slip, then lay down, which was a mistake. The loss seemed suddenly worse, far worse than she could have imagined. It was not the loss of the money, it was the loss of the dream. The dream as dreamed at seventeen returned vividly—the Left Bank, bookstalls along the quay, young artists, cafes in the thin sunshine.

Then she remembered the night when, not yet married, she had had to wait for Tim on a corner. Men had looked, and some had stopped, and she had known then that that first Paris dream was for men only, that a girl could not wander the streets of Paris alone at night.

And so the dream moved across the Seine, changing to young love, spring flowers, river trips, tea, dancing at dusk. And the amount needed to finance it had doubled.

The dream had faded during the children's younger years.

No time to dream while coping with such undreamlike problems as chicken pox, sore throats, feverish colds, regular meals, and piles of mending and ironing.

And then things eased a little and she started putting money aside again each week, but she found the dream had lost its magic.

When, she wondered, had she first lost the excitement of changing five singles for a five, two fives for a ten, two tens for a twenty?

Perhaps the loss had not really hit her that morning because the real loss had occurred long ago. Perhaps there were things you had to do at a certain age—or never—things like wearing flowers in her hair, a white dress to a spring dance.

She got up and crossed to the mirror. Her figure and her complexion were good, her hair as bright as ever. But the dream, what had happened to the dream?

Tim was still young and vigorous. As if to confirm this, the front door slammed downstairs. A silence followed. Then Tim bounded up the stairs, swept her up and swung her around.

"Happy birthday, darling!" He picked up her dress, stepped up on to a chair—his joke about helping her into her armor—and she let him drop the stiff dress over her, then zipp it up.

He put his hands on her shoulders and looked admiringly at her. "You know," he said jokingly, "you really don't look a day over thirty-four!"

"Well!" said Marian. "Thanks for the compliment, my sweet. I'm glad I've held up so well under the strain of this marriage."

Laughingly they linked their arms and hurried to join the children.

The table candles were lighted, and three packages lay beside her plate. She'd been right not to tell Tim yet. The children ate rapidly.

Marian looked at their happy, loving faces and felt a squeeze at her heart. They wanted new bicycles, Tim the car; and abruptly she knew that if she had the Paris money back she would spend it on the family.

That was why the dream had gone. She no longer needed it. If she could tell Tim that—and there was the five hundred in the bank.

Dorothy and young Tim rushed the dishes into the kitchen. Tim pinched out the table candles, and young Tim carried in the lighted cake. Marian felt a desire to laugh. She had baked it, but the children had decorated it, and they set it before her as their gift.

"Take a big breath," Dorothy said. To Dorothy, thirty-four candles must seem a great number to blow out in one breath.

On former birthdays, Marian had really tried, so that, theoretically, her wish would come true in one year. Tonight she did not care, but to please the children she took a deep breath, then looked at Tim, his face young-looking in the candlelight.

Once more the vision crossed her mind: Paris — spring — holding to Tim's arm as the breeze whipped her hair.

She blew and all the candles went out. As Tim relighted the table candles, their eyes met. He knew that at the last minute she had tried.

Dorothy was clapping her hands. "You get it! You get your wish this year!"

Marian smiled. "Well, we'll see." She opened her presents. The slippers from Dorothy were in her favorite color and correct size. There was a Persian-silk scarf from young Tim.

She felt tears come to her eyes. The gifts showed care and thought and love. But when she saw the compact from Tim, the tears brimmed over. It was a lovely silver oval, etched with a tiny Eiffel Tower.

"Hey, darling," Tim said, "don't cry, this is a happy day!"

She dabbed her eyes, fearful of what would happen when, filled as she was with love for Tim and the children, she would read Tim's note: "Buy something lovely for the lovely girl I love."

She picked up the white envelope. Inside, instead of the usual twenty-dollar bill, there were two objects—two steamship tickets on the Ile de France. The note said: "To introduce a lovely girl to a lovely city—at last."

"The children are going to your mother's farm," Tim explained. "And—I lifted your little hoard."

"But it wasn't enough, even with the five hundred in the bank!"

"I know. I couldn't get at your banked five hundred." Tim looked really embarrassed. "I've been matching your three dollars. Filing them in my office under Marian's Folly — Disappointment Insurance on."

(Copyright)



"Hey, darling," said Tim, when tears brimmed in her eyes, "this is a happy day."

Illustrated by Ron Tastic

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A light-hearted story

By **HOWARD RIGSBY**

ILLUSTRATED BY BROADHURST

Here's Your Hat

THE first view of the beach was breath-taking. The road climbed a final hill and suddenly there it was: the quaint town, the modest crescent of white sand, and the Pacific glittering in the morning sun.

The children screamed wildly at the sight, and Peter, the youngest O'Leary, started undressing the moment he saw the water. The dog in the back of the old car barked hoarsely and a musing, poetic look came into the blue eyes of the young woman at the wheel.

"Hey, Mum, are we really going to live here?" Bridget cried.

"Can I go right down and play in the sand?" Larry demanded.

The Widow O'Leary glanced into the rear-view mirror. "Peter, put your pants back on," she directed him absently.

The children leaned out the windows and screamed delightedly as the car proceeded down the hill.

"Hey, we're going to live here!" Bridget called out to an old gentleman in tweeds who was ambling sedately down the path beside the road. "Hey, our name's O'Leary!" Larry shouted. "What's yours?" Peter banged on the car with a shoe. "Hello!" he shrieked.

"Children, please . . . " Kate O'Leary said vaguely, but she could scarcely be heard above the excited barking of the dog. Poochie hung out the back window with her long spaniel ears flying in the breeze, like the children full of enthusiastic goodwill.

Presently the dusty, laden car turned on to the distinctive main street of the little beach-side resort; it was a thoroughfare justly famed for its subdued and simple beauty. Here there were no parking or neon signs. Well-groomed cars stood at the kerbs; and the people, most of them clad in varying stages of beach undress, moved leisurely about their affairs. Into this peaceful, well-bred scene the advent of the O'Learys was like a rocket.

After a bellowing, barking block or two, Kate saw a window with "Estate Agent" lettered on it and swung the nose of the car into a parking place. As she did so there was a minor grinding noise and some paint disappeared from the immaculate fender of an adjacent car.

"Oh, curse!" Kate muttered.

"Oh, what Mama said!" the children chorused.

"You kids behave," Kate warned them. She got out of the car and straightened her skirt.

A man emerged from one of the buildings and paused to study the O'Leary equipage. He gazed disapprovingly at the junk tied up on top and at the bouncing, vociferous chaos within.

Kate went into the office. The agent had a house or two for rent and he was charming and jolly in his manner until the word "children" was dropped. Then he looked at the Widow O'Leary as if she had mumps.

It was pretty much like that in the next place, and the next and the next. The agents all acted as if they had, to be sure, heard children spoken of before, but never favorably.

By that time Kate had begun to feel almost militantly maternal. It wounded her to think that some people would prefer not to have the three little O'Learys and their lovable dog as tenants. The O'Learys, she vowed, would settle in this town if they had to camp on the beach.

There didn't seem to be any more estate agents left on the main street, so when she arrived at the next corner she turned down a side street. After half a block she came to another sign.

This place was small; just a hole in the wall, really. Inside were an untidy roll-top desk, an unreliable-looking straight chair, and a dilapidated sofa.

It wasn't like anything else in the town, not quaint nor artistic nor even odd. It just looked downright homely. Still, when Kate, after waiting a few minutes for somebody to show up, decided to try the sofa, she was pleasantly surprised. She leaned back and sighed and somehow found her eyes closing.

Presently there was a sound of music and she started awake to see a little old man with a goatee perched on the edge of the chair. He was playing a soft little tune on a mouth organ and staring at her brightly. "Oh, ho!" he said. "Did I waken you?"

He turned at once to two neatly dressed little boys who stood in the doorway.

"Now then," he told them briskly, "that's positively the last tune." He reached into a pocket of his vest and took out two pennies, handing one to each of them.

"Thank you, Mr. Beggs," the little boys said politely.

"No spirit at all!" Mr. Beggs snorted as they withdrew. "Whatever's to become of this country, do you suppose, with all the little boys' faces so clean?"

"Oh, not quite all," Kate told him. And she explained about Larry and Peter, and Bridget, too, whose faces were nearly always dirty. Then, since Mr. Beggs evinced no signs of alarm, she also told him about Poochie.

He was such a good audience that she just went right on talking, telling him about Lieutenant O'Leary, who never came back from the war, and how she had found it necessary to do something—and so had got into the pleasant business of writing little tales for children and drawing pictures to illustrate them.

Even now, she told Mr. Beggs, she had a fine idea for a new story, all about a little Indian boy. But how could one write a story and draw pictures for it without a house of some kind to do it in?

At this point Mr. Beggs found it necessary to wipe a tear from his eye. "A most unnatural life for an attractive young woman!" he decided vigorously. "No husband! And now—not even a roof over your pretty head!"

"Yes, we are very badly in need of a roof."

Mr. Beggs rose and in an alert, bouncing way paced the three short steps it took him to reach a wall and then paced back. "Oh, yes, indeed!" he declared. "We must—at the very least—find you a house. A place for you and little Bridget and Larry and Peter!"

"And Poochie," Kate added.

"And Poochie!" Mr. Beggs agreed warmly. He paced a moment more, then he stopped and snapped his fingers. "Hmm," he said, thoughtfully. "How would you like a nice house right on the beach?"

"Wonderful!" Kate exclaimed. Then she held her breath.

Mr. Beggs grinned oddly. "Hmm," he said. "Suppose we get your car."

The ride along the beach was a lively one. Mr. Beggs played several selections on his harmonica while the children, between shrieks at the proximity of the ocean, sang lustily. The vast liver-and-white spaniel in the rear seat leaned far out of the car. For her the breeze off the water was laden with evidence of all kinds of feathered things, and she bayed eagerly for the hunt.

At last they stopped before a neat green gate. As soon as the doors could be opened, the occupants of the car's rear seats erupted in all directions. In a trice the Widow O'Leary and Mr. Beggs were left alone, while delighted shouts and eager howls faded down the beach.

"Spirited," Mr. Beggs observed. Then he giggled. "Come along!" he said in his spritely way. "Allow me to show you the house." He stuck his harmonica into his pocket and hopped out of the car.

As soon as Mr. Beggs unlocked the front door and she stepped inside the house, Kate was sure that she wasn't going to be able to afford it. It was just what she had always dreamed of.

There was a large studio living-room, beautifully furnished with old mahogany pieces, with a large stone fireplace, and above the fireplace a balcony upon which the doors of three small bedrooms opened—just the proper number to accommodate the three small O'Learys. Downstairs was a bedroom for her.

"Belongs to a very dear old friend of mine," Mr. Beggs explained. "An elderly woman. Sweetest little old maid you ever saw!"

Then he suddenly doubled over and began to make amused braying noises. "She'll be delighted!" he cried. "Absolutely delighted! She just loves children and dogs!"

"Still," Kate said, quite puzzled now by his behaviour, "the rent—I'm very much afraid——"

"Oh, don't worry about the rent!" Mr. Beggs said. "I promise it won't be more than you can pay. Here——" He handed her the key. "Lights are on," he said. "Gas is on. Now you just start right in making yourself at home, my dear."

Then, before Kate could even offer to drive him back, Mr. Beggs skipped out the front door and through the gate, and she heard him whistling merrily as he went off down the road.

By the time darkness fell the O'Learys were comfortably settled in their new home. In fact, it looked as if they might have lived there for years. Assorted playthings littered the yard. Among these lay the carcase of a large, decomposing fish, the property of Poochie, who had carried it up from the beach and laid it proudly at Kate's feet while she was cooking dinner.

Twice Kate had thrown it out, only to have it promptly returned. At last she had buried it—and still it had been retrieved. So now Poochie was confined. She lay sulking in the hallway, sniffing at the crack under the front door and occasionally giving the door itself a resentful blow with her paw.



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It seemed there was nothing she could do to convince this strange young man that he really was an intruder in her house.

A driftwood fire was burning in the fireplace, and after dinner Kate washed out some T-shirts for the children and hung them up to dry, stringing a rope from the balcony railing to a light fixture in the living-room.

Then she set up her easel and, working from sketches she had already made, began to do a pastel drawing of a little Indian boy. Meanwhile, Bridget, in her nightgown, and Larry and Peter, bathed and in their pyjamas, amused themselves mightily while they avoided going to bed.

They swung from the balcony and dropped into a pile of pillows, they played hide-and-seek and follow-the-leader. When they saw the picture Kate was working on they formed a circle and began to howl and stomp around like Indians.

Then Poochie lumbered in from the hall, barking and wagging her tail, and, since the radio was on too, Kate had to scream.

"Children! For the last time! Go to bed!"

In all the uproar, no one heard the front door open. Kate, who was facing the hall, was the only one to see the young man enter and stand at the living-room door, staring in at them.

Her first thought, strangely enough, was how awful she must look, barefoot, in just shorts and an old shirt and with her hair uncombed. Then it occurred to her to wonder who the young man was—and what did he think he was doing, just barging in like that?

Poochie was the first to react. She lifted her noble head and took a sampling of the air, then whirled eagerly from the hearth.

In her haste to arrive at the opened front door she disregarded the stranger entirely. Her big body hurtled between his legs, knocking him off-balance, and his suitcase fell from his hand. Poochie escaped from the house into the yard.

The music on the radio ceased abruptly and at that point the children, noticing they had company, stopped howling.

For a moment everything appeared to pause while they all gazed curiously at the visitor, who now was seated on their living-room floor, staring about him with a wild look in his eyes.

"What on earth goes on?" he muttered.

Kate put down the pencil she was holding. "I was about to ask that," she observed.

The young man got to his feet and surveyed the line of laundry for a moment, then looked at Kate. "My name is John Ames," he said. "Is your husband here?"

Kate informed him of her widowed status and he said, "Well, then, madam, what are you doing in my house?"

"Why, as you may see, Mr. Ames——" Kate began in a friendly way. Then she stopped. "Your house, did you say?"

Mr. Ames nodded. "It's mine for the next two weeks," he said, and as evidence he held up a key.

"Oh, that," she said. "What's a key? I have a key too."

"Where'd you get it?" Mr. Ames demanded.

"From Mr. Beggs," she said.

"Beggs!" he cried. "You mean that old

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There was a wild look in John's eyes as he gazed up at Kate O'Leary and her children. "What on earth goes on?" he muttered.

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IN BRIEF

There's nothing so cool, so fresh, so heavenly smooth and comfortable as lingerie made from 'Celanese' ACETATE Jersey! Such an easy surface, it actually glides with the body's movements, is caressingly soft to the skin. Never runs, shrinks or stretches, washes and dries like a charm.



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Continuing Here's Your Hat

pixie just let you move right in? With all these children? And with that great big dog?"

"He rented us this house," Kate replied stiffly, "if that's what you mean, sir. I also happen to know that this house is the property of a very dear old friend of Mr. Beggs, an elderly woman who is, I am reliably informed, a great lover of children and dogs."

"What?" Mr. Ames cried. "Did Beggs tell you that?"

"He certainly did," Kate said. Now, after some initial misgivings, she felt completely in command of the situation. "If you will please excuse me," she told Mr. Ames, "I will put my children to bed."

"To bed!" he cried, gazing at the three little O'Learys. "Oh, no—you can't do that!"

"Oh, no," the children echoed happily, "you can't do that!"

They began whooping it up again, rushing around the room. Music suddenly blared forth from the radio and Kate moved to turn it off, shouting at the children meanwhile.

Then Poochie returned. She stood in the doorway a minute, the cadaver of the fish hanging from her jaws, her truncated tail wagging happily. Then she dropped the reeking trophy at Mr. Ames' feet.

As the ghastly fumes rose, Mr. Ames sucked in his breath and staggered back. Kate watched him as he continued to back slowly out, picking up his suitcase. Their eyes met for an instant, and then he backed out into the night.

Oh, well, she thought, no doubt there are any number of crackpots in a place like this.

Still—after the children were finally put to bed and she sat on the couch and sewed a patch on Peter's jeans—she worried.

Mr. Ames, she had to admit, hadn't looked much like a crackpot. If there was one around, it could be that nice little Mr. Beggs.

With the first rays of the morning sun the three doors on the balcony swung open and three blond heads emerged. Silently, in single file they stole through the hall. Like mice they entered the downstairs bedroom.

"One," said Bridget.

"Two," said Larry.

"Three!" cried Peter.

They leaped on the bed and began bouncing up and down, laughing as their mother moaned.

"Hey!" Larry cried suddenly. "Look!"

They ceased to bounce, staring now into the patio that lay between the house and the garage.

"M a m a," Bridget said, "there's a man out there!"

"He's dead," Larry announced gravely.

Kate sat up. "What?" she cried. "Where?"

"Hey!" Peter said. "It's the man what didn't want us to go to bed!"

Like a ballet dancer Kate leaped up. From behind the curtains she peered out into the patio, while the children clustered around her.

The young man who reclined on the canvas-upholstered lounge was indeed their visitor of the night before, the

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vanquished claimant to the house, Mr. Ames. He lay on his back, an old trench coat thrown over him, and he was sound asleep.

Just at that point the gate to the patio opened mysteriously. Then Poochie appeared. Now from her jaws there dangled a large sea bird. Noting the visitor, she ambled across and stood beside him, wagging her tail. When he paid no attention she jumped on to his chest. She released her hold upon the bird for a moment while she shook herself.

Mr. Ames, meanwhile, had opened his eyes. He made a choking, desperate noise and tried to rise, but as soon as he lifted his head the bird pecked him on the nose. It then essayed a take-off, with Poochie howling mournfully in pursuit.

The O'Learys watched Mr. Ames run one finger gently along his nose. At this point he noticed the O'Learys, who were weak from laughter.

For a moment he regarded them thoughtfully, and Kate wouldn't have blamed him if he had thrown something.

She picked up a housecoat and then went into the bathroom for a first-aid kit. As she stepped out on to the patio, Mr. Ames was at bay on the edge of the lounge while the children ranged about him, jabbering excitedly. Kate shooed them back into the house to dress, then looked at Mr. Ames' nose.

"I'm awfully sorry," she said. "The skin is broken." She yanked off a piece of adhesive and stuck it on the wound. "What's the idea—sleeping in our patio?" she demanded.

"I couldn't find a hotel room," Mr. Ames said. He held one clenched fist up before him. "Oh, wouldn't I like to lay hands on that Beggs!"

"Just wait till I get some clothes on and you'll have an opportunity to," Kate advised him. "I'm going to see Mr. Beggs right now."

Mr. Ames shook his head. "I went over to his house as soon as I left here last night. He's gone fishing and won't be back for a week."

"Why," Kate said, "how very peculiar."

"Yes," Ames agreed. "Isn't it? But don't worry—he's not going to get away with this. A joke's a joke, of course, but this is going a bit too far. I think if you knew our Mr. Dalrymple you'd agree."

"Who's our Mr. Dalrymple?" Kate asked.

"Mr. Dalrymple happens to be the senior partner of the law firm in which I am one of the junior partners. Mr. Dalrymple owns this house and the only reason I can think of that might prompt our zany friend Beggs to refer to him as a nice old maid who just dotes on children and dogs is because Mr. Dalrymple, though elderly and a bachelor, is so precisely not that. He hates children. He abhors dogs. And he is very particular about who rents his house."

"Well," Kate said, "I don't care who owns the house. Mr. Beggs — who is a licensed estate agent, according to his sign—rented the house to me. I have three children to keep in it, work to do in it. I need the house!" She looked at Ames accusingly. "Why do you need a house?"

"What does that have to do with it?"

"A young able-bodied man like you," she continued bitterly. "All alone!"

"I'm all alone because I prefer to be," Mr. Ames said. "And this is my holiday. Mr. Dalrymple never rents the house during this month. He comes down himself or lets one of his partners use it. Beggs knows that."

"The point is," Kate said, "that Beggs did rent the house. The point is that I am in the house. The point is that I am going to stay in it."

"Have you got a rent receipt?" Ames asked. "Has the money actually changed hands? Do you have anything in writing at all?"

"That," replied Kate, "is none of your business, sir!" by now she was filled with wrath.

"That," he replied in a legal way, "is where you err, madam. I not only intend to spend my vacation in this house but I intend to protect Mr. Dalrymple's interests. I therefore order you now to get those monsters of yours and that great, demented dog off this property, to remove yourself and your possessions at once."

He hesitated, his glance wavering slightly. "Oh, I don't mean you have to get out this very instant," he conceded. "You may go ahead and have your breakfast here if you want to."

"Breakfast!" the Widow O'Leary cried, choking temporarily on her wrath. "You're darn well right, we'll eat our breakfast here! I'm getting tired of being pushed around by child-haters! I'm in this house fair and square and I'm going to stay here. And if you want to try to get us out you'll have to use force."

Mr. Ames grew very red in the face and stood staring at her, his jaw protruding. Then he muttered something unintelligible and marched purposefully out the gate.

Kate got the children their breakfast, and as soon as they had eaten and promised solemnly not to do more than get their feet wet she let them go off to the beach. After that she started work on the little Indian boy again. But her heart wasn't in it. She kept listening.

About ten o'clock a car came past the house and stopped by the garage. She got to the kitchen window just in time to see Mr. Ames come in the patio gate. There were no police with him. He was carrying his suitcase and several packages. He took a key from his pocket and unlocked the door of a small room at the back of the garage.

For a while he busied himself removing furniture from the room. He brought out an iron table and set it up, then some beach chairs. After that he swept the cubicle carefully and then she saw him setting up a canvas bed in there. Pre-

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IN AND OUT OF SOCIETY

By RUD



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This XMAS give the perfect practical gift !

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MARRIAGE CONTEST PICTURES

● *Here are pictures entered in section four of our Happy Marriage Contest. So charming are many of the photographs we have received that we have published nine, awarding to each a £5 progress prize. Further progress awards in other sections of the contest are announced on page 15 of this issue.*



WED IN 1890. Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Copeland, early residents of Katoomba, N.S.W. Mrs. Copeland, now in her 92nd year, still lives on the Blue Mountains. Picture entered in our contest by their daughter, Mrs. A. M. Brodstock, 21 Merrivee Street, Katoomba.



APRIL 30, 1902. Mr. and Mrs. J. Britten, of Bega, N.S.W., who celebrated the 50th anniversary of their wedding before Mr. Britten died. Inset is a picture taken at their golden wedding reception. Entered by their daughter, Mrs. F. E. Chaffey, of Tamworth.



JULY 4, 1906. There are three brothers and three sisters in this picture. The bride, Julitta Cocks, and her sisters, Winifred and Bertha; the groom, Charles Leggo, and his brothers, Ernest and Frederick. Entered by Mrs. Charles Leggo, Manly, N.S.W.



APRIL 21, 1897. Mr. and Mrs. Bolte, of Happy Valley, Ballarat, whose wedding took place at Queanbeyan. The picture from the family album was entered in our contest by their daughter, Mrs. James Chapman, 43 Jackson St., Casterton, Victoria.

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BOXING DAY, 1858. This faded 95-year-old wedding picture is of Queensland pioneers Mr. and Mrs. John Doyle, who lived in the Condamine district. Entered by their granddaughter, Mrs. L. A. Edkins, of Waitara, N.S.W.



JULY 20, 1903. Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Andrew and their attendants, the bride's sister, Mrs. G. J. Stook, and her husband. Mr. Andrew is on the left. Next to him is Mr. A. E. Smith, who gave away the bride, and at right is Mr. Smith's son. Entered by the bride, Mrs. C. A. Andrew, of Murrumbeena, Vic.



WED IN 1897. Group at the wedding reception of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. White, at Maryborough, Queensland. Mrs. White was formerly Miss Sarah Thom. Entered by the bride, Mrs. S. White, now of Coorparoo, Brisbane.



MAY 31, 1905. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Gates after their wedding at St. Mark's Church, Fitzroy, Melbourne. Miss Sarah Jones, sister of the bride, was bridesmaid. Best man was Mr. Bert Newell. Entered by the bride, Mrs. Gates.



FEBRUARY 19, 1916. Mr. and Mrs. John Atkin, who were married at Scots Church, Melbourne, with bridesmaids Mary Cook and Elsie Atkin, Alison Burnel, flower girl, John Cook, best man, and Cyril Rundell, groomsman. *More progress awards in other sections on page 15.*

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If you are expecting a baby... then baby will be expecting an Auswool Shawl

Are you dreaming of the wonderful day when baby arrives and you hold the precious little bundle in your arms? How proud and glad your heart will be... how adoring and protective your mother instinct.

Among the many essentials you will be needing ahead of baby's arrival is a cuddly, snuggly, soft, woolly-warm Auswool Shawl. And if neither mum nor granny has mentioned it, and if you are not very adept at dropping a hint, you should tootle along to your nearest store or baby shop and choose one before it's too late.

You'll like all of the eight attractive Auswool designs. They have a fine-quality, hand-knitted look about them. Their shell centres are fleecy-soft to the touch, bulk nicely, and keep baby safe in an even temperature. They're made from 100% virgin merino wool highlighted with rayon decoration.

For more than a quarter of a century beautiful Auswool Shawls have been recommended by doctors, advocated by nurses, favoured by mothers and beloved by babies.

Because nothing is too good for your "little one" you will want an Auswool Shawl. *It is a "must" in every layette.*

For softness, beauty and woolly warmth choose an

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What could be better for baby's first Christmas gift than a cosy Auswool Shawl.

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£2500 marriage contest

Readers' advice on how to be happy

Many of our readers have written to tell us what a fine and worth-while purpose our Happy Marriage Contest is serving with its really splendid advice on the important problem of preserving married happiness.

Progress awards of £5 each are given here for interesting and helpful advice from competitors in the first three sections. Wedding picture awards appear on pages 12 and 13.

HERE are the full details of each of the four sections of the contest:

1. Best advice to married couples from anybody:

You don't necessarily have to be married yourself to have constructive ideas on what goes to make a successful marriage. This is a section anybody can enter—and anybody can win.

2. Best advice for husbands from a wife:

This is a section for wives only.

We ask you to draw up a list of the advice that you think would help a husband to make a marriage happy.

3. Best advice for wives from a husband:

This is the section for our married men readers.

Your advice can be of a practical nature, or of an idealistic one. Or a judicious combination of both.

4. Most charming wedding group picture.

The picture may be of bride and bridegroom only, or it may include their attendants. However, the bride and groom must be in the picture.

Wedding pictures may be submitted by the bride or bridegroom, their children or grandchildren only.

In the case of the same picture being submitted by more than one person, only that received first will be eligible for judging.

Section winners

HERE are winners of £5 progress awards in the three written sections:

SECTION 1. BEST ADVICE TO MARRIED COUPLES FROM ANYBODY.

MY advice, for what it is worth, as I am just a young woman, is this: No matter how young or how old you are, try not to worry about the little things in life.

As long as there is true love in your marriage there is very little that you cannot overcome.

After all, if you think back to before you were married, the little things that your partner does that annoy you now you probably loved then.

So just give way now and then and you will find that by doing so you will be well pleased with the result.

I am not going to tell you about my family life, except to say that we are wonderfully happy together, with our baby son, as I could go on all day about our life together.

But this is advice to you, so—

If your husband or wife does forget that birthday or anniversary, don't make a fuss, but give him or her a kiss and say it doesn't matter, and I bet he or she will love you all the more for it.

Another rule, I think, is to have a family as soon as possible. You will know what I mean when they see Dad playing with the toys on Christmas Day.

Children give you a feeling of a warm glow when they do or say something sweet, and it passes from husband to wife, and seems to make you just that little bit closer.

Of course, sometimes there are no children. My advice in that case is to adopt a baby if you love children as I do. They bring their love, I'm sure.

£5 progress award to Mrs. A. Walshe, 2 Northumberland Street, Clovelly, N.S.W.

SECTION 2. BEST ADVICE FOR HUSBANDS FROM A WIFE.

MY advice to every husband is: "Be a man, don't let your wife wear the pants."

Be firm but fair with her, and she will respect you more. No one admires a hen-pecked husband. But don't make the mistake of becoming a bully and thinking that every word you say must be law.

We wives have minds of our own, too, you know.

Another tip is—don't be selfish. Consider your wife and plan little surprises for her. It will pay dividends. You will find your favorite dishes cooked, and you will always be welcomed with a happy smile.

When your wife is off color, do be sympathetic.

Above all, don't belittle your wife in company. Some men have this appalling habit. See that you don't adopt it.

And please don't blame your wife for everything the children do wrong. They are your kids, too, you know; so take your turn at watching them.

Do take your wife out once a week if possible, and hand her a compliment if she deserves it. But if she has let her appearance deteriorate, tell her so. You won't be popular for a while, but it will jolt her into doing something about it, and she will thank you later.

Finally, let her have a try at handling the money. She may be a better manager than you. It works well in our home; try it in yours.

£5 progress award to Mrs. Joan Paterson, Miva Street, Maleny, Queensland.

SECTION 3. BEST ADVICE FOR WIVES FROM A HUSBAND.

FIRSTLY—and this is most important—don't bottle things up. If you've a suggestion or complaint—get it off your chest. If your main interest lies outside the home, say so; see what can be done about it. Bottling-up will inevitably lead to resentment.

Secondly, accept the fact that the emotional needs of husband and wife may differ. Be prepared to discuss them and plan compromises. Maybe your husband needs plenty of demonstrativeness; you are more self-sufficient — don't accept these as incompatible, but plan adjustment like mature adults. And learn to judge when his needs are more fundamental than yours.

Thirdly, don't start on the basis that you are the mistress of the domestic sphere AND a minor expert on his business and other interests. Enter his sphere by all means, but be prepared to let him enter yours.

Lastly, have your children while you are young. Apart from its being better for the children, you will not have stabilised a childless pattern of life, nor will you be too old and tired to take up the threads of your pre-family interests later on. And remember, keep those threads in your hands while your children are still young.

Basic to all this is the principle that marriage develops and matures people. Ideal marriage is made by hard work. The tools with which to work are compromise and discussion, enabling you both to be aware of changing needs and to effect a happy fusion of these within the framework of marriage.

£5 progress award to Peter M. Whyte, 40 Devon Street, Heidelberg, Vic.

CONTEST RULES

ADDRESS your entries "Happy Marriage Contest," The Australian Women's Weekly, Box No. 5252, G.P.O., Sydney.

You may send in as many entries as you like, but each must be accompanied by a separate coupon.

Put your name and address in block letters at the top of each page of your entry. Write on one side of the paper only.

Written entries may be as short as you like, but should not exceed 250 words.

Copyright in all entries shall belong to Consolidated Press Ltd. Entries in the written sections will not be returned. They will be destroyed after the contest.

Prizes will be awarded in accordance with the judges' views of the relative merits of the entries received.

No correspondence will be entered into regarding the judges' decisions.

Employees of Consolidated Press Ltd. and it subsidiary companies are not eligible to enter the contest. Nor are their husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers, or sisters.

Finalists of sections two, three, and four will be asked to sign an affidavit of eligibility.

HAPPY MARRIAGE CONTEST

December 2, 1953. Paste one coupon on each entry. I warrant that the accompanying entry is my own original work.

I accept the conditions of entry and agree that the judges' decision will be final.

Signature
(Mr., Mrs., or Miss)
Address (block letters)
..... *State*

THE PRIZES

The prizemoney of £2500 in our Happy Marriage Contest is made up as follows:

£1000 for the best entry in the contest.

£250 each for the best entry in the four sections. Total £1000.

£50 each for the second best entry in the sections. Total £200.

£25 each for the third best entry in the sections. Total £100.

PROGRESS AWARDS of £10, £5, and £1 for entries published during the course of the contest. Total £200.

GRAND TOTAL £2500.

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Now — the slim ivory and gold case. Perfect for your handbag!

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"Angel Face is the ideal make-up I've been waiting for! It gives a flattering color and finish to my skin, doesn't need water, isn't drying, and stays on! And Angel Face is made to order for handbag use — I carry mine constantly!" *says MRS. JOHN A. ROOSEVELT.* AF31A



REMEMBER THIS PICTURE? It shows the Sara Quadruplets (from left), Alison, Phillip, Judith, and Mark, when they were only five days old. This is one of the 60 color and black-and-white illustrations in "The Story of the Sara Quads."

Story of Sara Quads

With Christmas only four weeks away, thousands of readers are taking advantage of The Australian Women's Weekly's book offer, "The Story of the Sara Quads."

THE Sara Quadruplets, Alison, Phillip, Judith, and Mark, now three years old, are well known to our readers.

When they were born in August, 1950, their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Percy Sara, of Bellingen, N.S.W., agreed to a proposal by The Australian Women's Weekly to look after the future of the four children.

As a result, readers have been able to follow through our pages every stage of the Quads' development, in pictures and stories, from their first days in the Bellinger River District Hospital to the present time.

Now in one charming book we offer a permanent and complete record of the Quads' eventful first three years.

"The Story of the Sara Quads," priced at only 6/9, will give children and their parents a great deal of pleasure.

Sixty pictures in color and black-and-white, many of which are being published for the first time, give intimate glimpses of the Quads' lives.

Their home life with their parents and seven-year-old brother, Geoffrey, in a peaceful country town is pictorially recorded, as well as their celebrations, outings, and adventures.

The book's striking cover design incorporates portraits of the four children as they are today. They are among the best pictures ever taken of the Quads.

The story is simply told so that children can read it easily for themselves.

It describes the Saras' task in bringing up the Quads and shows the interesting differences in the personalities of the four children.

One chapter of the book is devoted to their biggest adventure, the trip to England to visit Mrs. Sara's parents.

How to order your copy

To obtain "The Story of the Sara Quads" by mail, fill in the coupon below, cut it out, and send it with your remittance for 7/6 (including 9d. postage) in an envelope addressed to The Australian Women's Weekly Book Department, Box 7052, G.P.O., Sydney.

You can also obtain the book immediately for 6/9 by calling at The Australian Women's Weekly office in your State. Addresses of our interstate offices are as follows:

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Bombe Alaska

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Peters is Australia's most sustaining dairy product containing all the health-giving properties of milk in a more concentrated form. Rich in vitamins, carbohydrates and proteins.

PETERS BOMBE ALASKA: For this dish your sponge should be at least 2" deep. Make a well in the centre, approximately ½" deep and 5" in diameter. Fill this with fruit salad and sprinkle the whole with sweet sherry. Heap Peters Ice Cream on the fruit salad and cover ice cream and sponge completely with meringue. Pull into peaks with spoon. Set in 375° oven for about 5 minutes until light golden. Bring to table, sprinkle few tablespoons brandy in hollows. Warm four tablespoons brandy, set aflame, pour over meringue—which will flare up.

ALTERNATE BOMBE ALASKA. Omit spirits but for flame effect, soak lump sugar with lemon essence and light!



Merry-go-round Banana Split

Put your favourite flavour in first, then a cone shaped helping of Peters Ice Cream. Place sliced banana in position. Garnish with whipped cream and a glazed cherry. Sprinkle with chopped nuts.



Strawberry Cake and Ice Cream

Top a square of sponge or cup cake with a slice of Peters Ice Cream. Surround with sliced strawberries (or your favourite fruit) and add chocolate or strawberry flavour, whipped cream and a strawberry.



Rainbow Parfait

Ever see anything so luscious? The idea is simple. Fill a tall glass with a layer of colourful fruit and layers of ice cream topped off with chopped nuts and garnish with whipped cream and a glazed cherry.

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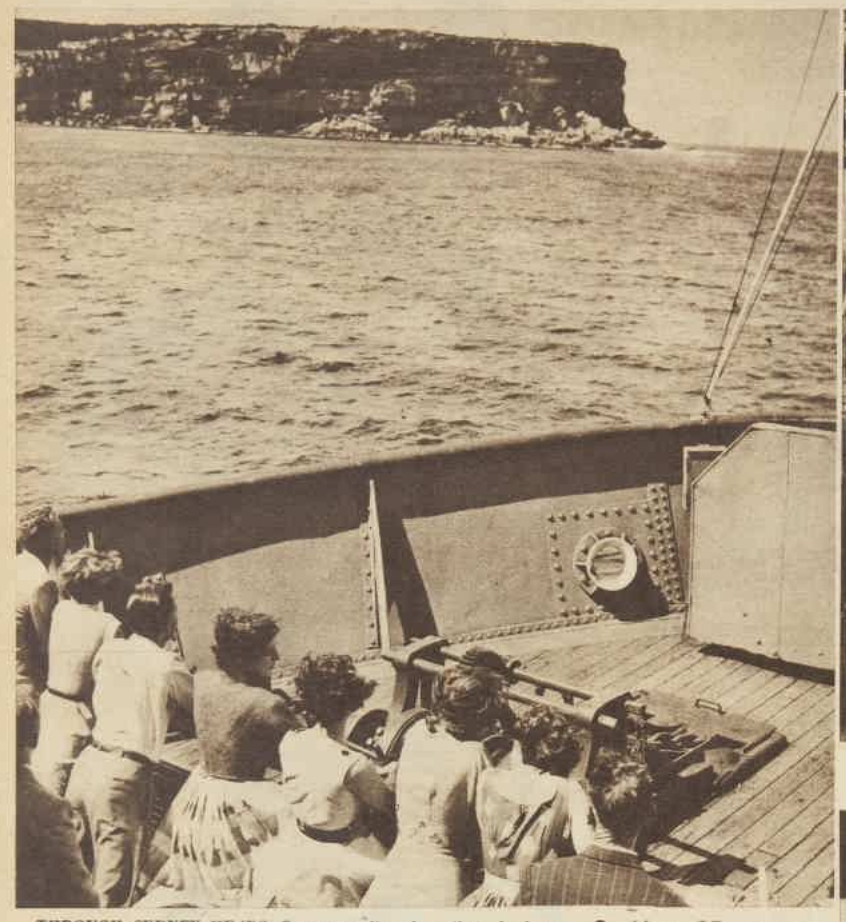
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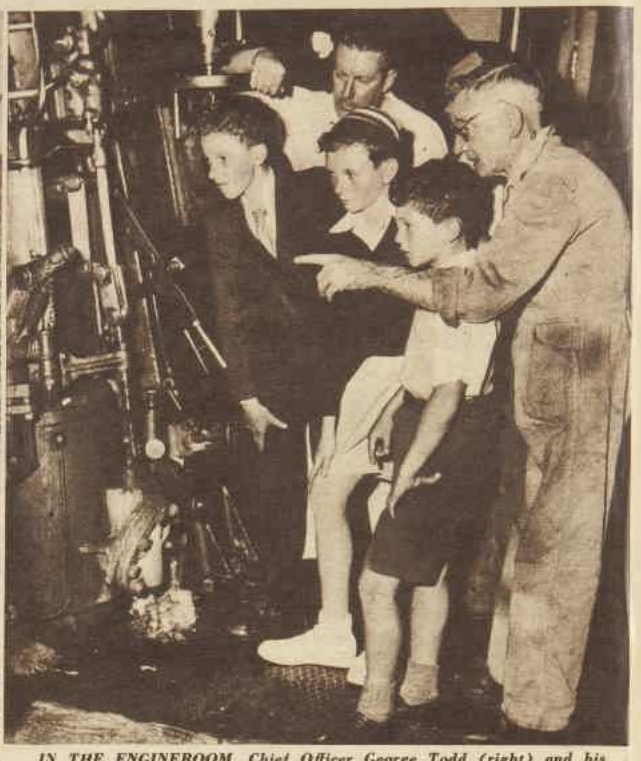
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FERRY MAKES OCEAN CRUISE



THROUGH SYDNEY HEADS. Passengers line the rail at the bow as the South Steyne sails out to sea on an afternoon's cruise up the coast to Broken Bay and the Hawkesbury River.



IN THE ENGINEROOM, Chief Officer George Todd (right) and his assistant Bob Luther explain the working of the machinery to young passengers, from left, John Rae, Jim Swan, and James Wilton.

● *After 15 years spent in making half-hourly trips between Circular Quay and Manly, the ferry South Steyne now sails out through Sydney Heads every Sunday on pleasure cruises to Broken Bay and the Hawkesbury River. Travelling up the coast the South Styene is seldom more than a mile off shore so passengers can pick out landmarks.*



BINOCULARS that he has used on voyages all over the world help Mr. John Ollerenshaw, of Brookvale, to pick out some landmarks as the South Steyne sails up Sydney Harbor on the homeward journey.



GETTING HEP. June Howarth, of Canterbury, and Ray Shart, of Bankstown, try some jitterbug steps on the rolling deck while Peg Clark, of Blackheath, plays the drums in the ferry's dance band.



AT SEA. Charles Dorl, of Bondi, leans on the rail to admire the sunset as the South Steyne steams down the coast on the trip back to Sydney Harbor. He was one of many passengers on board who were making their first ocean voyage, and described it as "most exciting" and "a real thrill." The ferry was crowded.

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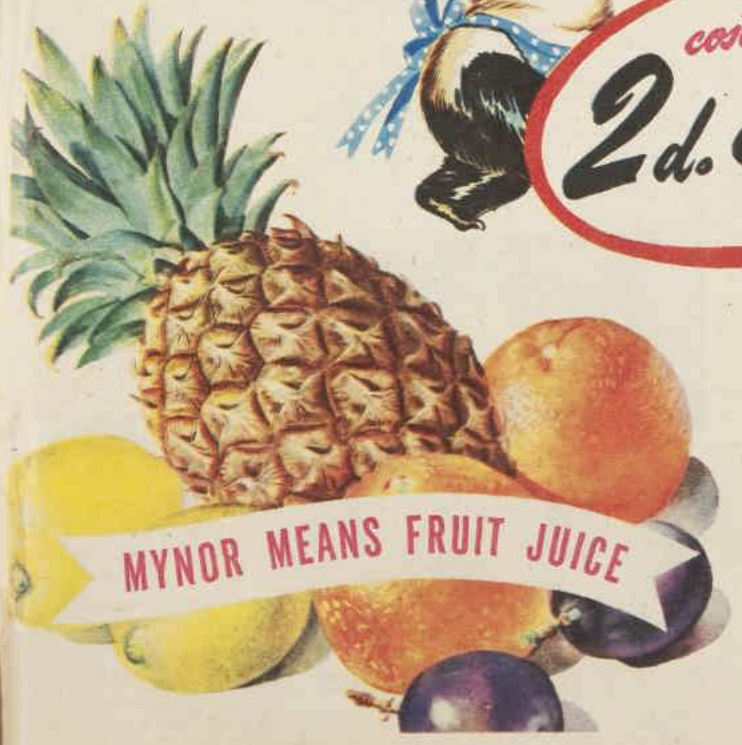
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...it costs you less than **2d. a glass**



MOTHERS! Here's the most healthy drink you can give those thirsty children of yours! Pure, delicious Mynor, rich in all those essential vitamins A, B, C and D contained in the fresh juices of oranges, lemons, pineapples and passionfruit. And, just imagine what these would cost you to buy at present-day prices! Pour a little Mynor Fruit Cup into a glass, fill it with pure, wholesome water, and let the children drink as much as they want. Just think . . . all this costs *less than 2d.* a glass!

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FRUIT CUP

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"WE MADE IT!" Five young Australians who drove an old taxi-cab from London to Sydney were jubilantly on arrival. They are Harley Suttor, of Coonabarabran, Tony Barker, Noreen Tweeddale, Sally Edmanson, and Paul Cant, all of Sydney.

WORLD TOUR BY TAXI

They packed everything but guns for 12,000-mile drive

By HELEN FRIZELL, staff reporter

Five young people from N.S.W. who packed themselves, their luggage, and camping gear into the old taxi-cab CGF680 in London and made an overland journey back to Sydney in it took everything with them but a pistol on their trip.

THE tourists-by-taxi are Noreen Tweeddale, of Dover Heights, Sally Edmanson, of Seaforth, Tony Barker, of Clovelly, Paul Cant, of Bexley, and Harley Suttor, of Coonabarabran.

They bought a gun when they reached Perth. "We wanted to shoot rabbits on the Nullarbor Plain," they explained soon after taxi CGF680 chugged to a halt in the Domain, Sydney, where relatives had assembled to meet them.

The five travellers bought their taxi for £50 in London and began their journey on August 11.

"Everyone was friendly and the whole trip ran smoothly," they said.

Twenty-three-year-old Harley Suttor, was co-driver with Paul Cant on the 12,000-mile journey.

Fears of relatives in Australia that they might meet with some mishap were unfounded.

Herbie Mark III—as they named their taxi—puffed and boiled its way over the Gross Glockner, Austria, which is the highest mountain pass in Europe, bounced over rough Yugoslav roads, and collected layers of desert dust on the journey from Bagdad to Basra.

The passengers got suntanned, put on a few surplus pounds, but had no illnesses. Nothing was stolen except a small packet of cigarettes, and the whole trip ran according to the planned itinerary arranged by the Automobile Association in London.

"We saw 13 countries altogether," explained 24-year-old Paul Cant, proceeding to rattle off the names—France, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Pakistan, and India.

"The roads carried signposts all the way, so there was no chance of getting lost, or of having to navigate by compass. We just used ordinary maps."

Herbie Mark III, in addition to its load of five passengers, carried 12 gallons of water, 12 gallons of petrol, and five spare tyres when the journey started.

Slung from the front bumper-bar was a canvas waterbag, unobtainable in England, but posted from Australia to Sally Edmanson by her mother.

The three boys and two girls each possessed an army-type kitbag and rucksack, while a special pack held their "good" clothes of suits for the men and a dress each for the girls.

A rack over the roof of the car carried the tent and sleeping-bags, plus a tin basin for bathing.

Sally and Noreen, who travelled to England on the same ship almost three years ago, took some time to persuade Paul Cant to include them on the drive home in Herbie Mark III.

"We told him we were good cooks," said Noreen. "That helped."

Throughout the journey they cooked most meals on a pressure-cooker over a spirit stove. The cooker attracted crowds whenever it was seen by peasants in Yugoslavia and Greece.

Spaghetti was their staple diet, and they took plenty of tinned food along with them.

Through the three months the five carried cameras and kept diaries.

Noreen Tweeddale, who sometimes felt almost too tired to write, kept her diary up to date by scribbling down impressions each night by the light of a globe run into the tent from the taxi's battery.

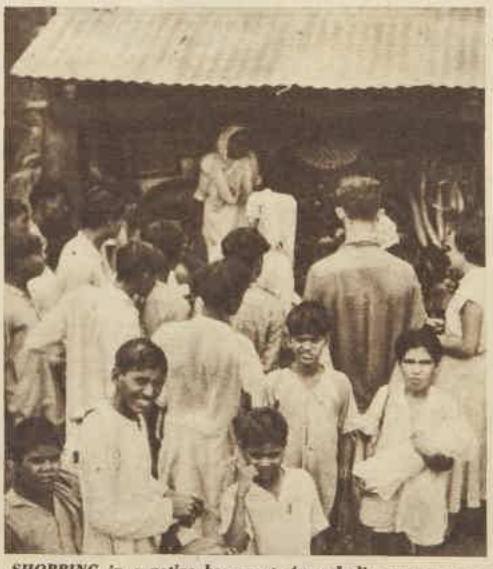
After a tour of India, they embarked in the liner Strathaird for Fremantle, bringing their taxi with them.

By the time they had driven overland from Perth to Sydney, Herbie Mark III was as dust-coated as its passengers.

Totting up costs they found that the journey had cost them £150 each and that Herbie Mark III had done 20 miles to the gallon.

At Mrs. Macquarie's Chair in the Domain they unloaded Herbie for the last time, and answered for the last time the familiar question from passing motorists: "Where did you come from?"

The reply "London" brought the look of astonishment they expected.



***SHOPPING** in a native bazaar at Agra, India, was an experience for the Australians. Tony Barker took this photograph as crowds of children gathered to watch the tourists.*

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Princess Margaret's London hats

● **On this page are eight photographs of Princess Margaret wearing Simone Mirman hats. The others show hats from this milliner's current collection.**



SIMONE MIRMAN, who makes Princess Margaret's hats. Miss Mirman says, "Princess Margaret is the perfect client because she always knows exactly what she wants, and will wear her favorite hats many times in a season and even two seasons running."

\+ + +

DRAMATIC COOLIE HAT (right) made of white pleated felt. Narrow brown velvet ribbon outlines the brim edge, a flat matching bow trims the top of the crown.





EXOTIC model (above) made in white lamb and black velvet is cleverly designed to fit firmly on the head and to cover the hairline and ears.



TURBAN closely wrapped and hair concealing, made in topaz-colored panne velvet. The jewel in the centre of the model is matched to the gem-set, gold-stranded necklace.



MOLE VELVET and matching taffeta toque worn with Princess Margaret's favorite mole velvet waisted coat.



FINELY PLEATED grey satin in a pixie-type toque designed to wear with a mist-grey chiffon summer afternoon dress.



DIOR-INSPIRED white coolie hat lined in red. Princess Margaret likes her hats to follow current Paris trends.



FEATHER HAT worn by the Princess two seasons running. This is usual when Princess Margaret likes a model.



VELVET BERET, another favorite with Princess Margaret, who wore the model in 1952 and again this season.



TAILORED STRAW and matching yellow grosgrain toque is designed for a suit with a belted jacket and pleated skirt.



BLACK VELVET and white guipure for a cap-like model worn with a feminine black chiffon afternoon dress.



CLOSE-FITTING hat of cream-colored straw, piped in white, worn with a coffee-colored silk one-piece dress.

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GET YOUR 'BIG SISTER' FRUIT CAKE
FROM YOUR GROCER TODAY . . .
AND DON'T FORGET
'BIG SISTER' PLUM PUDDING



Exclusive 'BIG SISTER' Christmas Icing

by Janet Blair

3 lbs. pure icing sugar
3 ozs. liquid glucose
2 egg whites
½ teaspoon lemon juice
½ teaspoon vanilla
red and green food colouring

Reserve half of one egg white. Drop balance (unbeaten) into middle of sifted icing sugar in bowl. Add melted glucose, lemon juice and vanilla. Work sugar in from the sides until a smooth, stiff paste is formed. Lift on to board dusted with sifted icing sugar. Knead like pastry until icing has absorbed sufficient sugar to hold its shape. Cut off a small portion for decoration. Roll balance to a 12" square, barely ¼" thick with rolling pin coated with icing sugar. Brush cake with remaining egg white, lift icing on to cake. Mould and smooth over top and sides of cake with hands coated with icing sugar. Trim excess icing from bottom edges with sharp knife. Add dabs of green colouring to threequarters of portion saved for decoration, knead until evenly coloured. Roll to ¼" thickness. Cut out Christmas trees as illustrated, using paper pattern and small sharp-pointed knife. Moisten trees underneath with egg white, press lightly on to cake. Colour balance of icing red and cut fubs for trees. Apply to cake in same way.

BUTTER ICING FOR PIPING

3 tablespoons soft butter icing made by creaming 1 level tablespoon butter with 1 cup sifted icing sugar and 1 or 2 teaspoons orange juice or sherry. Colour half the butter icing red, balance green. Use to pipe "Merry Christmas", edge decoration and lattice on sides.

Allow cake to stand for 24 hours before cutting.



HOME BAKED IN THE OVENS OF LILLIS & CO. LIMITED, SYDNEY—MAKERS OF FRUIT MIX, COCKTAIL CHERRIES, CHUTNEY

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Elderly Sydney artist paints exotic birds

DELICATE watercolors of birds of paradise recently exhibited in Sydney by 89-year-old artist John Ward caused great interest among bird lovers and ornithological experts.

The entire exhibition, which included oil paintings of New Guinea natives, was sold to one anonymous buyer.

Mr. Ward has painted the intricately plumed and colored birds of paradise in remarkable detail. His watercolors, three of which are shown on this page, look like fine oil paintings.

Fourteen expeditions to New Guinea between 1913 and 1928 collecting rare birds for zoos and museums gave Mr. Ward the material for his pictures.



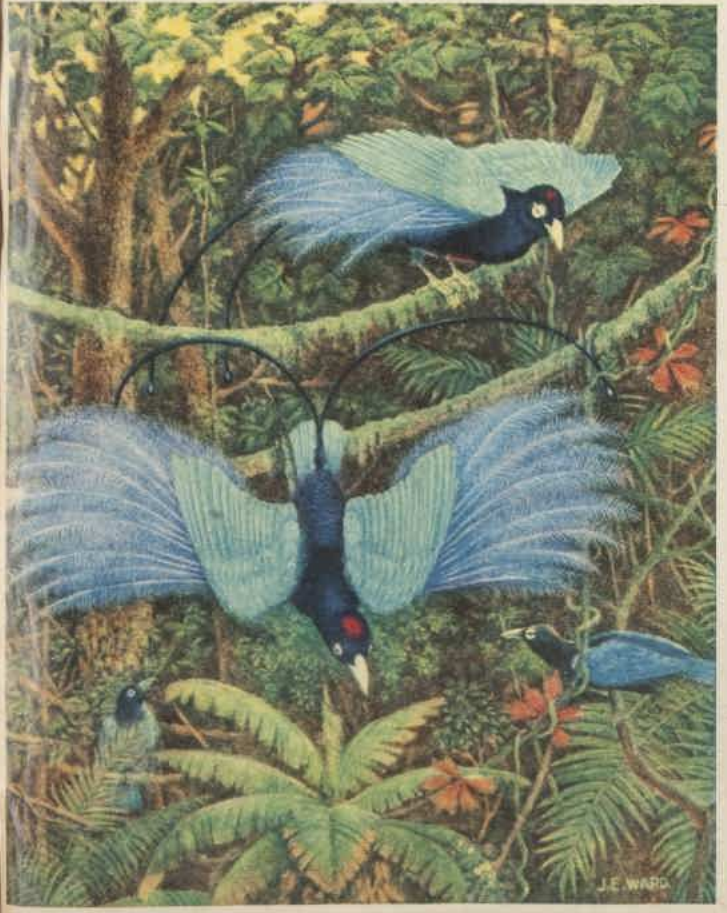
ARTIST John Ward poses beside one of his bird paintings.

Birds of paradise were his specialty. As an ornithologist, he got to know every feather on their exotic bodies and; as an artist, he shows every feather with faithful accuracy.

Born in Birmingham, Mr. Ward migrated to Australia in 1882. In his time he has been a lithographer, film maker, and writer. He has been painting since he was seven years old.



TWO FANTASTIC SHAFTS trail from the head of the King of Saxony's Bird of Paradise (Pteridophora alberti), painted by Mr. Ward. The shafts, each two feet long, are hung with enamel-like pennants. The female birds have no glamor.

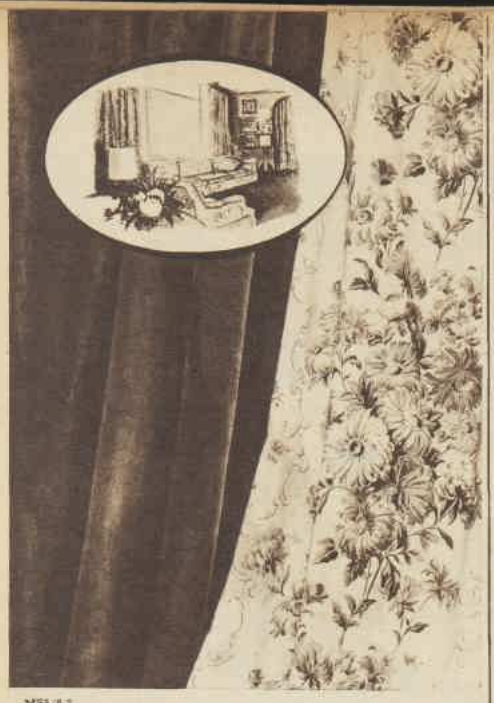


WONDERFUL Blue Bird of Paradise (Paradisornis rudolphi) was the reason for Mr. Ward's first expedition to New Guinea in 1913. He made four trips before he found it. When courting, the bird hangs head down shaking out its feathers to attract females.



GORGEOUS PLUMAGE of the Red Bird of Paradise (Paradisaea rubra) is shown in every detail. Mr. Ward comes from a family of bird-lovers, and for many years had his own aviaries at his home in Balmain, Sydney. Pictures by Frank Gardiner.

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MORLEY

ON UNDERWEAR, KNITWEAR AND SOCKS

MOTHER



"Look, Mum! They've painted the park seats."

BUTCH



"Y'ought to sack your carpenter, Mac. These screens were loose."

It seems to me

By



Dorothy Drain

LAST week I looked in one afternoon at the N.S.W. tennis championships, a soothing change after recent incursions into the prizefighting world.

Tennis fans, compared with most sports crowds, are restrained to the point of gentility. True, they clap loudly, they murmur their disappointments and condolences, and on occasions they cheer.

But anything in the nature of barracking is so unusual as to bring glares of disapproval from others and a fit of sulks upon a temperamental player.

Another reason that makes tennis soothing is that everyone over the age of thirteen knows what is going on.

Even I do—and that's more than I can say of most games.

One knows, of course, that cricketers are trying to make runs and footballers to kick goals, but there it ends.

And that's a thing that makes me look forward to television. While other people are worrying about its cultural value, I'm anticipating some instructive Saturday afternoons.

To have the players at close range and an announcer describing what they're doing may, for all I know, turn me into a football fan.

* * *

THE Hatter Information Centre in London recently announced that four out of five women like men to wear hats.

But they discovered that only 56 per cent. of the hat-favorers thought men looked better that way. The others said: "Hats are more suitable."

In that statement women gave away their basic attitude to men's clothes. A woman likes a man to be a background for her.

There is every sign that men's dressing will swing back to the more colorful. Bright casual clothes are now commonplace.

At present a raised female eyebrow can still send a man scuttling back to his neat pin-stripe, but in 10 or 20 years' time, beware! The girls, in their good blacks, may become the "suitable" backgrounds.

* * *

DOMESTIC incident reported by the Australian wife of a New Australian:

A Frenchman, he didn't care for Australian cooking, and taught his wife quite a lot about French cooking.

One evening, feeling annoyed with him for various reasons, she decided to pay him out at dinner by serving fried sausages, a dish for which he had formerly expressed great loathing.

"Ah!" cried the perverse creature, his face lighting up. "Sausages! Lovely. We haven't had them for ages."

Assimilation, they call it.

* * *

IN the mail this week, a splendid new specimen to add to the collection of words ending in "ise."

The word is "miniaturised," and was sent to me by Mrs. Joan Humphries, of Melbourne. She found it in an advertisement for a "miniaturised tape recorder."

Derived, I suppose, from "to miniaturise," and we may confidently expect to hear soon of "miniaturisation."

I AM sorry to learn that a Viennese skin specialist has marketed an idea which I've been thinking about for years.

The skin specialist is one Dr. Erno Laszlo, and his idea—make-up to wear in bed at night—will probably bring him a fortune.

According to a New York message, he claims that his products contain medicinal substances which aid the skin while the wearer sleeps.

Long ago it occurred to me that cosmetic manufacturers were missing a potential market by not exploiting the dislike so many women have of looking at their own faces in the mirror in the early morning.

However, beyond mentioning it to a friend in the trade who promptly got married and had several children (who kept her so busy she hardly had time to make up her face at all), I didn't do anything about it.

All the women who assiduously cream their faces at night are sure to leap gladly on products which decorate as well as "nourish."

And, such is the simple faith of the female, when the stuff reaches the Australian market I'll be along boosting the sales graph with the rest.

* * *

LISTENING to the radio the other day I heard a collection of records of old-time songs, among them "The Long, Long Trail."

That happens to be one of my favorite songs because, according to relatives, it is the only song I have ever been known to sing in tune.

Engraved on my memory is the excited cry of an aunt, calling to other aunts: "Come and listen, the child's singing in tune."

I was, as I well remember, chanting "The Long, Long Trail," and my pride was intense. It is my firm belief that many years later I made an equally good stab at "White Christmas," but adult friends, more critical than aunts, will not commit themselves on the point.

* * *

AN American woman who advises airlines passengers on travel problems has a recipe to help women travellers meet people. "Take an empty cigarette lighter," she says.

That's what you might call a modern slant on the poor little match girl.

* * *

BROWNIE, 20-year-old horse of Sydney breadcarter Bill Walker, eats five ice-creams a day on his round. "I know I spoil the old boy," said Bill, "but he's one of my best friends and he doesn't get much out of life."

Said the baker's horse: "I've a good, kind boss,
I work, but I'm not complaining.
He feeds me well, and he never gets cross,
And ice-cream is very sustaining.

"What I always say, and my mother did, too,
Is, though to the grindstone I'm fated,
I don't really mind how much I do,
But I'm glad I'm appreciated."

don't let **drying skin** give you a **'getting-older'** look

Drying skin often begins to show after 25 because the natural oil that keeps skin soft and fresh starts decreasing.

But in Australia, many young women show signs of ageing skin in their early twenties. Our severe climate can make you look as many as *ten years older* than your real age.

Watch out for trouble spots—flaky patches, criss-cross lines, "down-lines" by your mouth, sagging chin-line. Use a special *replacer* to offset the drying out of your skin's natural oil by age and the Australian climate. Use this special Pond's *lanolin-rich* Dry Skin Cream. Give extra attention to trouble spots—this way:



That Matronly-looking Sagging shows along your chin-line. **To Tone Up**—"Pinch along" chin to ear with lanolin-rich Pond's Dry Skin Cream to give skin rich *lubrication.*



Thread-like Dry Lines on Forehead dig little furrows to age you. **To help Erase**—Circle Pond's Dry Skin Cream over forehead. **3 features** make Pond's Dry Skin Cream *extra effective* for dry skin. *Rich in lanolin; homogenized* to soak in better; contains a *special emulsifier* for extra softening; Pond's Dry Skin Cream brings that glorious smooth, *young* look to your skin.

The Lady Maureen Cooper says: "Pond's Dry Skin Cream makes taut, dry skin more comfortable right away."

PG32



15 hairsets for 3/6

QUICKSET WITH CURLYPET

Give YOUR hair new silky loveliness and save pounds on your hair-do's.

Get a tube of concentrated **Curlypet**—squeeze **Curlypet** into a pint milk bottle of warm water—shake till mixed—now you have a pint of the best, most fragrant quickset lotion you've ever used. Get concentrated **Curlypet** for 3/6 from your chemist or store.

QUICKSET WITH CURLYPET

CN.5

Cherub shoes

for children

AT ALL GOOD STORES

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sets the style!

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The man in the picture has chosen Casben Walk-Shorts in American Beige Sanforized cotton gaberdine. YOU can choose Casbens in any fabric, any colour you fancy! Nobody else makes Walk-Shorts in anything like Casben's variety!



Make this test! Compare Casbens with any shorts you like. Look **inside!** See how much better finished Casbens are—the quality in every detail. You could pay a little less—or more—but you can't buy finer than Casben.

Walk-Shorts by Casben

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can bring YOU...
a lovelier complexion
in 14 days!



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FOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS
IN 14 DAYS

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- Less oiliness!
- Added softness and smoothness!
- Fewer tiny blemishes—and incipient blackheads!
- Complexion clearer, more radiant!

Not just a promise but a proved plan!

THIS IS ALL YOU DO!

Wash your face with Palmolive soap. Then for 60 seconds massage your clean face with Palmolive's soft lovely lather. Rinse! Do this twice a day for 14 days. This cleansing massage will bring your skin Palmolive's beautifying and lasting effect.



Regular and Economy Bath Sizes

PALMOLIVE...
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722

Hestia
NYLON BRA
for curves without care!



dries in a flash
needs no ironing

Also in magical nylon come Hestia's new Dance Belts and Girdles . . .

FROM YOUR FAVOURITE STORE or SALON



MRS. LILLIAN GILBRETH SAYS: "I want to read modern poetry . . ."



"I am determined to like modern music . . ."



"Every woman can get herself organised."

Age cannot catch her

Brilliant mother of "dozen" is modern, unquenchable

Few visitors have fitted so easily into an Australian household as celebrated American efficiency expert and real-life mother of "Cheaper by the Dozen," Mrs. Lillian Gilbreth, who spent her five days in Sydney at the Roseville home of Mr. and Mrs. W. Scott and their teenage sons Brian and Ronald.

By AINSLIE BAKER, staff reporter

NOW a stimulating and fast-moving 75, Lillian Gilbreth, 1948 American Mother of the Year and the holder of eight university degrees, has been visiting Australia on a whirlwind 12-day trip as part of a world lecture tour.

Before returning home, this remarkable woman, whose entry in the American "Who's Who" is almost as long as President Eisenhower's, will visit Formosa, India, Spain, and Brazil.

"Nobody knows what fun it's been," the mother of 12 and grandmother of 26 said of her stay in the Scotts' home.

And Lillian Gilbreth will never know what her short visit has meant to the Scott family.

"We've never had breakfasts like this before," 18-year-old Economics student Brian said excitedly. "Talk about modern poetry, economics, international politics, and discussions on contemporary music! It's been wonderful."

Charming Mrs. Scott, who can be said to have borne the brunt of an insistently ringing telephone, a high-pressure social programme, and an upheaval of household routine, said, "It's been a rejuvenation."

Understatement

MR. SCOTT, a management consultant colleague of Mrs. Gilbreth, said with clear understatement, "None of us will ever forget this visit."

No visitor could be in the house long without becoming aware of the rare quality of the relationship between Lillian Gilbreth and the Scott boys.

From the distance of her own age and experience, she treated their youthful chivalry with a grave respect.

When a neighboring teenage girl, in shorts and checked shirt, called to thank her for her autograph, Mrs. Gilbreth received her with the same grave deference.

The triumphant conqueror of a man-size professional career, direct, decisive, and with enormous strength of character, Lillian Gilbreth is feminine enough after 29 years of widowhood to still have her name entered as Mrs. Frank Gilbreth in the New York telephone directory.

She prefers to be Mrs. Gilbreth and uses her title of Doctor only for platform appearances.

She also likes pretty, gay cottons, and is pleased that they have emerged from a period of unfashionable retirement.

Her husband, Frank Gilbreth, was an American consulting engineer and efficiency expert. His work in motion study and elimination of fatigue in industry was about to be recognised after many years when he died of a heart attack.

His death occured three days before he was due to leave to preside over a World Congress of Scientific Management in Prague.

Lillian, a doctor of philosophy, and his partner, made arrangements to have the children (the youngest was two) looked after, and sailed in her husband's place.

It had been Frank Gilbreth's ambition to give his children a university education. By working alone at a man's job in a man's world Lillian Gilbreth was able to carry out his wish.

The famous mother of the dozen admits that she is determined to like modern music. "I want to hear much more of it, and have time to read much more modern poetry," she said.

It's easy to understand why life in "Cheaper by the Dozen" and "Belles on Their Toes" (family autobiographies written by a son and a daughter) was such fun.

There is something perennially youthful and unquenchably enthusiastic about the once red-headed mother and pioneer career woman.

Mrs. Gilbreth thinks that most women are what their children make them. "It's when one of the children says 'You know, Mom, you're slipping in this little thing' that they begin to do something about getting themselves organised.

"There's no woman who can't get herself organised if she's really dissatisfied with things as they are. It's the women who aren't dissatisfied who're content to muddle along."

At 9 o'clock on the morning of her departure for Canberra to be officially feted at the nation's capital, even though she had not packed, the guest room occupied by Mrs. Gilbreth was exquisitely tidy.

But sometimes women of the calibre of Lillian Gilbreth refuse to be what their children would like to make them.

"Now when I was first invited to come away on this long trip, I didn't think I should leave the children. So I wrote to them all, asking what they felt about it.

"One of the boys—I won't say who—rushed to see me, and said that he didn't want me to go so far from home.

"What he wanted," she said with surprising vigor, "was for me to be like the resigned, dutiful mother of Whistler's portrait.

"I pointed this out, and he went away to think things over. When he had, he came back to say I was quite right, and there was no reason at all why I shouldn't go."

No matter where she has been called on business trips, it has always been Lillian Gilbreth's habit to leave each of her children an itinerary.

At the end of each itinerary is the message, "I know you'll call me if you need me."

Although her arrival in Australia was delayed by an alteration in airways schedule, and her tightly packed programme was thrown into confusion, Lillian Gilbreth sailed unruffled through a schedule that would have floored the average woman half her age.

Travels light

THIS renowned time and motion study expert believes in travelling light. "As far as I can, I check what I take against the known engagements," she said. "But I don't believe in trying to take everything for unseen contingencies. Except in the Sahara Desert, you can always buy what you want along the way."

Her own method of making the constantly needed checking of luggage simple is to have all her cases of the same bold green-and-yellow tartan.

Dr. Gilbreth, inefficiency experts will be delighted to hear, believes in lists.

I can think of no better way of paying tribute to this wonderful woman than by quoting from "Belles on Their Toes," in which her son Frank and daughter Ernestine say this of their mother:

"The most loving and understanding of mothers, with all the most delightful feminine qualities, she would accompany her family on shopping excursions armed with blueprints, a copy of the magazine 'Iron Age,' and a shawl she was crocheting.

"Yet there was a time when Mother wept easily, when she was afraid of walking alone at night, when a lightning storm would send her shuddering into a dark closet.

"All that ended the day Dad died. It ended because it HAD to end."

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THE ROYAL TOUR BEGINS

To drive the Queen: proud birthday duty

As the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh took off from London Airport on the start of their round-the-world tour, one of her subjects who looked forward to the ensuing 24 hours with the greatest pride was William Charles Whayman, coachman to the Governor of Bermuda.

From ANNE MATHESON our Royal tour correspondent in Bermuda

THE reason for his pride was that he had been told that on Tuesday, November 24, during the Queen's brief scheduled stay at Bermuda, he was to have the honor of driving the Royal couple on a tour of the island.

November 24 is also Mr. Whayman's 50th birthday.

He was in the army when he came to Bermuda in 1922.

He recalls the pomp of Royal ceremonial occasions when serving with the army, and he determined that his white doeskin coat and trousers and tropical helmet would gleam whiter than usual if possible on the great day.

Sir Alexander Hood is the fifth Governor of Bermuda whom Mr. Whayman has served.

Doubtless the Queen will meet many Australians on her tour long before she arrives in Sydney. In Bermuda Australian theatrical producer Bruce Yorke, formerly of Sydney, is putting on the play "The Young Elizabeth."

It is being staged at Bermuda's only theatre, the Bermudiana, which is attached to the fashionable hotel of the same name, the manager of which, Mr. John Swindells, is also an Australian.

With celebrated Broadway star Uta Hagen as Elizabeth I, the production is the North American premiere of the play, which had a two-year season in London, where the Queen saw it just before her Coronation.

Bruce Yorke was among the guests invited to the garden party at Government House on November 24, one of the biggest events of the Queen's 20-hour visit to the island, a day of drives through lanes of oleanders and hibiscus hedges, between houses of pink walls and limewashed white roofs.

One of the towns on the Royal route, St. George, is the oldest settlement, and was founded by Admiral Sir George Somers, who was wrecked on the island of St. George in his ship Sea Venture in 1609.

Hamilton, on the main island, is now the capital.

One of the transformations prepared for the Queen's visit was the face lift given to the ferry Wilhelmina, which was painted in gay colors and fitted with verandah awnings.

Normally it takes visitors cruising, but was refitted to accommodate the Royal party at a buffet luncheon on board, while watching a dinghy race in the Sound.

The luncheon was planned as a typical Bermudan picnic meal—cold lobster salads, cold fried chicken, bananas, baked West Indian conkies, and Bermuda sweet potato pie.

Bermuda dinghies are deckless 14-footers with masts 28-30 feet tall, carrying more sail than most boats of their size. Sailing in Bermuda is often called acrobatic sailing.

The dinghies carry a crew of from five to seven and one man bails continuously, usually with a washpan.

Bermuda's five large harbors are ideal for sailing and for that reason must be of great interest to the Duke.

Doubtless he would have liked to tackle here some of the gamest fish in the world—tuna, marlin, wahoo, amberjack, and bonefish—but for the time allowed.



FORMAL DINNERS are among the functions which appear frequently in the list of engagements drawn up for the Royal tour. Here the Queen is the guest of Admiral Sir George Creasey in the battleship Vanguard.

A drive through the most beautiful part of the island, the next item on the programme, is followed by a rest, and then the garden party.

Lady Hood, wife of the Governor, realising that the Queen would need to rest, has made sure that she can enjoy the maximum of leisure by planning an exact timetable while Her Majesty is at Government House, and has rearranged furniture so that the Queen's apartments appear more spacious, and are therefore more relaxing.

Decorations are in soft greens with pastel furnishings and mosquito netting at doors and windows.

Poincianas, stephanotis, frangipani, hibiscus, bougainvillea, and poinsettia are some of the flowering trees and shrubs to be seen from the Queen's rooms.

In accord with the Queen's simple tastes in food, Lady Hood has chosen a four-course menu for the dinner party at night—soup, fish, roast pheasant, and an iced sweet. Coffee is to be served in the drawing-room.

Thirty guests have been invited to the dinner. To decorate the mahogany table Lady Hood's choice is passion flowers and zinnias with a tall palm tree centre piece in silver, a family heirloom of prominent citizen Mr. Hal Butterfield.

As the second day of the tour begins with a 4.30 start by air for Jamaica, plans were made for the Queen to retire early.



PROUD DUTY. William Charles Whayman, coachman to the Governor of Bermuda, Lt.-General Sir Alexander Hood, was appointed to drive the Queen on a scenic tour of the island on November 24, his 50th birthday.

At that hour the scent of night blooming cereus will make the air fragrant.

Among the gifts prepared for the Queen in Bermuda was a bottle of distinctive Bermuda passion-flower perfume which is not produced anywhere else in the world, and is the colony's only export.

Perfume making is a home industry, the flowers being grown, picked, and dried out by housewives, and the perfumes distilled in a tiny factory.

Passion flowers are purple, mauve, or white. They do not last long cut, but the Bermudans prolong their life by dipping them in wax for corsages.

One of the things that have amused me here, and of which I am sure the Queen will have heard, is the habit of referring to the leading families as the "Forty Thieves." The title does not worry the bearers at all, and some of them use it themselves.

Generations of Butterfields, Trimminghams, Trotts, and Tuckers have run Bermuda, owning the leading stores and commission houses, the bigger hotels and guest houses.

They are also the bankers, lawyers, doctors, and members of Parliament.

Since there is no income tax in Bermuda, and a high standard of living, their sons and daughters do not leave the island. There are no death duties either.

Many of the "Forty Thieves" still work in stores or offices on which their names have been painted for two or three hundred years.

Though they are the leaders of social life, many stand in their shirt sleeves by day waiting on customers and running their businesses, but their wealth and prosperity is impressive, as is the standard of living throughout the island.

● Color pictures of Jamaica, pages 30, 31. These pictures were specially taken by the U.K. Office of Information and by Mr. William Tenschert, of New York.



FERRY WILHELMINA, which was specially decorated to carry the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in Bermudan waters, is seen in this picture approaching the wharf at right.



ARRANGEMENTS were made for the Queen to address children and young people's organisations in the little park at right at Albuoy's Point, Hamilton, capital of Bermuda.

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TOSCA or TROIKA ... *Handbag size 6/9; larger sizes from 10/6 to 72/-*

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Famous wicker bottles from 36/6 to 235/-

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BLUE BLOODS ON SALE



THE RING at King Ranch, Risdon, Queensland, where a recent cattle sale realised 17,900 guineas. One well-known property owner bought three bulls at 1700, 1200, and 1000 guineas each.



VICTORIAN Peter Baillieu (left), who is one of the directors of Risdon, takes time off for a chat with visitors Joan Macmillan and Don Filmer.

● **This year's sale of Santa Gertrudis cattle, the second held at the King Ranch, Risdon, Queensland, was attended by more than 1000 people, and the proceeds from the auction of 16 bulls amounted to 17,900 guineas.**

THE ranch was established by Robert Kleberg, owner of the famous King Ranch in America, little more than a year ago.

Mr. Kleberg's partners are Sir Rupert Clarke and Mr. Peter Baillieu, of Victoria, and Mr. Sam Hordern, of N.S.W.

Highest bidder at the sale, Mr. K. J. Atkinson, travelled from North Queensland to bid. He paid 2500 guineas for Kingsville Texas Ambassador, a purchase which cost him nearly 1000 guineas more than the bull he bought last year.

One city visitor, hearing the price Mr. Atkinson paid for Kingsville Texas Ambassador, commented, "What's he going to do? Wrap it up in cotton-wool at night?"

Country women are almost as interested in cattle as their menfolk, and the dressing at the Risdon sale had much of the color of a spring race meeting.

And we've discovered why the price is always in guineas, not pounds, at cattle sales. The extra shillings are the auctioneer's commission.



MANAGER OF RISDON, Mr. H. Douglas (right), discusses the sale with director Sir Rupert Clarke and Lady Clarke (left) and Sir Rupert's English cousin, Jacynth Lindsay.



THIS SANTA of the cattle world weighs 992lb. and is not yet 12 months old. Risdon bred, he will join the Ingham, Qld., stud of Mr. K. J. Atkinson. Price: 1050 guineas.



COOL SPOT under the willows was found by Queenslanders Mr. and Mrs. F. Keenan, of Dalveen, and, from left, their daughters, Zilla, Katherine, and Sylvia, with Margaret Greenup, of Maryland, Qld.

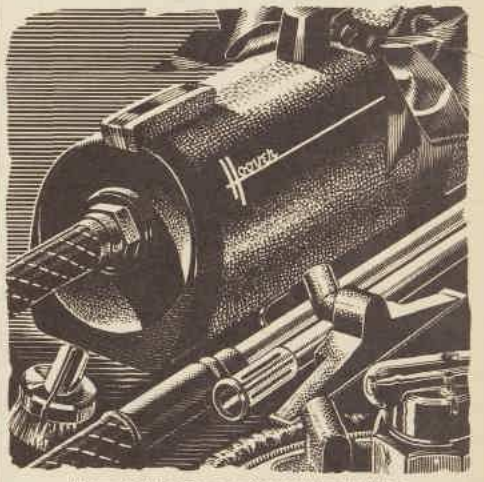


SENIOR CONSTABLE Pat Dwyer, in summer uniform, was at the sale to see the bulls and the buyers did not disturb the peace.

Time to start hinting for Xmas!



.. Maybe you'll be lucky enough to hint yourself into a Hoover!



Hoover Cylinder Cleaner, with attachments including Spray Gun: £34/13/0 or easy weekly payments.

HOOVER Cylinder Cleaner



NO DUSTBAG TO EMPTY

A good hint goes a long way in the few weeks before Christmas. And with this wonderful Hoover Cylinder Cleaner you'll have the gift of less housework . . . more time to yourself. In the home or flat with polished floors the Hoover Cylinder Cleaner does the complete cleaning job quickly and easily—and packs away in pint-sized space. And it's the *only* cleaner with no dust bag to empty! So start hinting now—and it should help your cause to mention, casually, that this Hoover is less expensive than many other cylinder cleaners; that all attachments are included—even a spray gun for painting jobs!

When you get a Hoover you get the Best!

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The Queen's Island Paradise — Jamaica



JAMAICA, which means "land of water and hills," is one of the loveliest islands in the British Caribbean Sea. This view shows the north coast harbor of San Antonio.



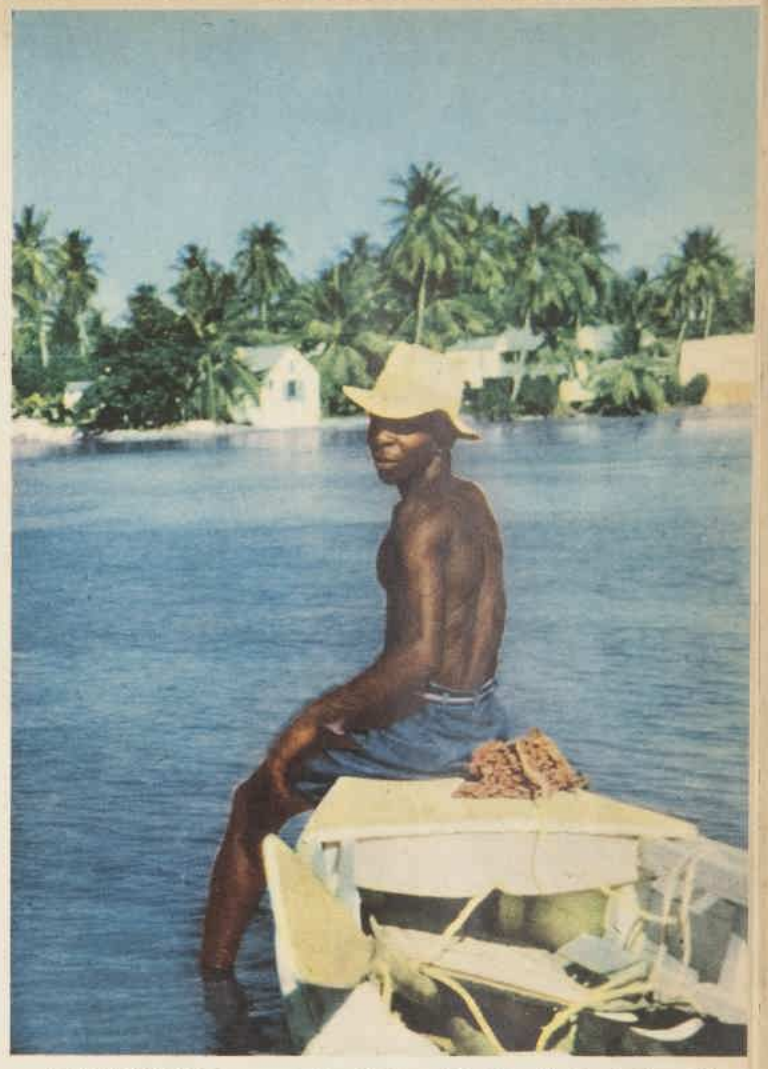
SCENES like this are on the route of the Royal drive. Jamaica, the biggest island in the British West Indies, was captured from the Spanish in 1665.

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● After a two-day visit to Jamaica, jewel island in the Caribbean Sea, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are to embark in the Royal yacht Gothic for the Commonwealth tour on this Friday, November 27. Flying the Royal Standard, Gothic will sail for Panama, and will arrive in Fiji on December 17, in Tonga on December 20, and in Auckland, New Zealand, on December 23. February 3 is the date scheduled for the Queen's arrival in Sydney.



MONDAY IS WASHDAY IN JAMAICA, TOO. Popular rendezvous is "The Cascade," on the White River in the Jamaican hills. Monday morning native women come to do their laundry, while their children enjoy themselves swimming and playing in the clear water.



A NATIVE FISHERMAN surveys the beautiful bay at Ocho Rios. The Royal visitors will see much of the picturesque island in their seven-hour drive from Montego Bay in the north-west to King's House on the outskirts of Kingston, the capital, in the south-east.



MARKETING BEFORE SCHOOL. The day starts early in Jamaica, and this little native girl sets out to do the shopping with her donkey. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are to arrive in Jamaica by stratocruiser from Bermuda on November 25.



ORCABASSA, banana-loading port typical of Jamaica. For their busy two-day programme on the island the Queen and the Duke are to be the guests of the Governor-in-Chief of the British West Indies, Sir Hugh Mackintosh Foot, and Lady Foot.

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2. Switch on for a few seconds—never more than three minutes.

3. Empty out contents ready to use. Wash container by simply rinsing with warm water.

Semak Vitamizer

REGISTERED TRADE MARK

SV31

YOUTH SERIES by Betty Best

It's present time again

The Christmas season with all its jollities and gifts can be full of pitfalls for the unwary—the young and not so young.

PRESENTS between teenagers should be given with just as much thought and care as any others or they may be the cause of embarrassment and heartburnings.

The young man who, for weeks, has been trying to make an impression on his ideal girl might be lucky enough to turn the trick with a small, cleverly chosen present of her favorite perfume or a scarf that tones perfectly with the new dress he so admired.

But the young woman with a crush on the boy who has hardly noticed her yet will only embarrass him to the point of running a mile if she sends him an expensive tie. A friendly card would be more suitable.

If either boy or girl has been far-sighted enough to shop early and then gets a card from someone for whom a present has already been bought, the present should not be given, but a card sent off instead.

The receiver of a present in those circumstances would feel uncomfortable about meeting you again.

If things work out in reverse, and you get an early present from someone to whom you'd planned to send a card, slip some small gift in with it if you want your friend to feel he or she means as much to you as you do to him or her.

But if you feel you don't want to exchange gifts, just send a card with a word of thanks.

THE tradition of giving presents at Christmas is a pleasant one and lots of fun. No one would wish to see it abolished, despite last-minute panics when it is discovered that someone has been overlooked.

At the same time the situation can get out of hand. At some girls' schools, for instance, every child in a class gives a present to every other child.

There's an easy solution to that sort of thing, and you can be the most popular member of your staff by suggesting that, if presents are the rule, everyone brings one unlabelled gift to be placed on a "tree."

See that a maximum price for the presents is agreed on, and that no one exceeds it.

Then, on Christmas Eve, have a gathering at which everyone picks one present blindfold—you'll have a lot of fun, save shopping time and money, and no one will feel out of it.

Finally, don't forget the unbreakable rule that must be kept if you want working relationships to be comfortable ones:

Never, never, whatever you do, buy a present for the boss.

He neither expects nor wants expensive presents from you. He knows you couldn't possibly afford them.

The older you get the more you realise that your most valuable possession is time. To give some of your time to someone older than yourself will send that person's estimation of you sky-high.

Now is the perfect season for you to prove that you haven't forgotten all the nice things that people have done for you throughout the year.

Remember dear old Mrs. Smith, a friend of your mother's, who heard that you wanted a cherry-red sweater to go with your new slacks and knitted one for you?

Imagine how thrilled she'd be with a small Christmas card that says you are thinking of her, even though months have elapsed since she knitted the sweater for you. Of course, you thanked her at the time.

There's the man who lent you his car so that you could take your girl-friend to that out-of-town dance.

You said "thank you" then, but a card would show you had not forgotten his kindness.

IF your funds have been depleted by family presents there are all sorts of ways of giving to older people—ways that will only take a little thought and effort and will be remembered for their unexpectedness long after the boxes of talc or chocolates have gone.

Girls who know that an aunt or old family friend is giving a pre-Christmas party will know how much energy she'll have to expend.

It's often a rush at the last minute, so what could be nicer than an offer to come down and set the table or help with the savories?

You can make up your mind whether you will say, "This is my Christmas present" or just go ahead and do it; but whichever way it goes it will make a wonderful impression.

If you've got a garden at home and you know some people who are spending Christmas in a flat, there's nothing nicer than a bunch of flowers on Christmas Eve, and if you've got the artistic touch try, in your own style, to arrange a mixed posy that will fit straight into a vase—it makes it more personal.

There are dozens of jobs that boys could do instead of buying gifts.

How about offering to cut the elderly neighbor's lawn so that it would look just right for the holidays?

Christmas is the acceptable time for everyone to make kind and generous gestures. It also provides teenagers with the opportunity to prove that they are growing in graciousness.

A bachelor's opinion :

ARE YOU HEART-BROKEN?

AT some time or another everyone suffers a disappointment in love and winds up with what he or she believes is an irretrievably broken heart.

You may spend weeks or months tortured by hurt pride or deluged in the silent tears of self pity.

There is no way out, you feel, there will never be any happiness to match that which you have lost.

Then a new attraction appears on the horizon and without any warning you are in love all over again.

This just proves that the human heart has pretty strong recuperative powers and that the first one and only love has taught you something which will help you appreciate the second "one and only"—and possibly even the third.

DISC DIGEST

IF any dowagers from the Metropolitan's "Diamond Horseshoe" have bet their sparklers on Patrice Munsel being an unqualified success in the movie role of "Melba," they'll be wearing rhinestones instead of diamonds this season. Like all operatic sopranos, she sounds acutely uncomfortable, on EA3128, singing two songs so much more suitable for the pop sorority. They're "The Melba Waltz" and "Is This the Beginning Of Love?" They might almost have been written by Ivor Novello when he wasn't trying very hard.

* * *

"THE Melba Waltz" gets a much better treatment by Victor Young on DO70050, and gains vitality and tunefulness. The fact that it's coupled with the theme "The Bad and the Beautiful," from the film of the same name, makes this a worthwhile double. The latter is what you might call strawberry flavored, but nevertheless adds up to good listening.

* * *

DO70061 offers some terrific musical hokum which I just couldn't resist. Again it's a film title, "Return To Paradise," story being based on parts of James Michener's follow-up book to "South Pacific." There are tom-toms and lots of civilised savagery. Camarata is the maestro-cum-witch-doctor. Flip is called "Only Fools," a fresh little tune with a compact and satisfying set of lyrics. I'll venture a handful of uranium that "Paradise" makes the hit parades in one, despite the fact that it's straight instrumental. (Release date: January 14, 1954.)

* * *

FOLK who take their dancing seriously will be keen about Y6509, which couples that real old-timer, "Yearning," in quickstep time, and the equally vintage "The Waltz You Saved For Me." If you plan to foot it at some Christmas parties, ask to hear this disc by Wally Fryer and his perfect tempo dance band.

—BERNARD FLETCHER

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To be sure of long-lasting Naturally Pretty Curls

BE BEAUTY-WISE AND NEUTRALISE

It's the step that takes only a few short minutes—but what a difference it makes.

INSIST on Richard Hudnut home permanent WITH NEUTRALISER BOOSTER



Always neutralise your Home Permanent. Leaving this all-important safety-step to chance or the imperfect oxidising action of the air is like driving a car without brakes.

That's why the Richard Hudnut Home Permanent gives you the most effective neutraliser known to chemistry today to *stop* the action of the waving lotion at the right time and to restore your hair to its natural healthy springiness.

And that's why Richard Hudnut Home Permanent also has the exclusive extra ingredient, Neutraliser Booster, to speed the action of the neutraliser and lock in your lovely soft wave. Because of Neutraliser Booster, **Richard Hudnut Home Permanent gives you a far better wave in half the time** taken for "no-neutraliser" waves. It's time-tested, safe, success-sure.



At all chemists and selected department stores . . . **12/-**



Richard Hudnut egg creme SHAMPOO for naturally soft, shiny hair!

It's soapless . . . but its real secret is egg, which makes the hair so much more manageable; brings out the lovelight in your hair. See how much easier your perm will take, how much longer your perm will last, how much more alluring your hair will become. 4-oz. bottle, 4/11, 8-oz. bottle, 8/9.

It's an ideal Christmas Gift!

NR41-142

Worth Reporting

BOXER Tom Laming, who won a £50 bet by punching a speedball for eight hours three minutes, told us that during his month's training he had "busted" 10 speedballs valued at five pounds each.

We called in at his Golden Gloves Gymnasium, Glebe, N.S.W., two days before his attempt.

Laming, a 29-year-old, 13-stone, five-feet-nine version of Joe Palooka, was giving the pear-shaped speedball a bashing with his knuckles.

"Like a go?" invited Mr. Laming. He stepped back and we gave the ball a timid jab.

"Ah, you'd never make a boxer," said Mr. Laming. "Your knuckles aren't square. Now my 12-months-old kid, Tom, he's a born fighter. I've never seen him with his hands open. He closes them the way I do.

"When he wakes up in the morning he'll hammer with his fists at the end of his bed, and when he comes down to the gym he crawls straight into the ring, stands up, and pulls himself around by the ropes."

On the day Laming Major hit the speedball for eight hours three minutes nonstop Laming Minor, attired in boxing trunks, gloves, and laced shoes like his dad's, went to the gymnasium to watch.

He saw and heard his father make the speedball sound with 6000 pocketa-pocketas to the hour—about 50,000 during the eight hours.

Mr. Laming chewed gum most of the time, wore goggles (the draught caused by the flying speedball hurts the naked eye), lost 16 pounds in weight, and ate lunch while hitting away with one hand.

* * *

SITTING by our radio we heard a mellow-voiced A.B.C. news announcer proclaim: "There is considerable anxiety overseas about the cost of sending trams to the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956."

Unfortunately our delight in the prospect of this "toast-rack" tourney was cut short by an apologetic voice cutting in with: "I beg your pardon. I should have said teams."



"I call him 'Sunshine.' It's a sort of joke between us."

Song of welcome for the Queen

MR. OSCAR W. WALTERS, who travels in the boot trade and is also a song writer, turned up in our building brandishing a freshly printed copy of his latest composition: "Royal Welcome Song."

"Elizabeth we hail you, the Queen of our golden land," chanted Mr. Walters, hurrying on to say that his song had been recorded by the North Sydney Technical High School Boys' Choir and the Eastern Command Band.

Fast-talking, grey-haired Mr. Walters whistled a few more bars, and added, "Everyone's going to be singing it. You'll be singing it. It's so catchy. Now, last week I was up at the N.S.W. State Parliament House. Have plenty of friends there.

"At 7 o'clock at night I took the recording along to Mr. Lamb's room — he's the Speaker — and we played it through. The whole N.S.W. Cabinet was there, and they listened, then went on to sing.

"Just thought I'd tell you," remarked Mr. Walters, dropping the sheet music of Royal Welcome Song (Gracious'y Acknowledged by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II) upon our desk.

We'd try to sing it, but unfortunately we can't read music—only words.

A young man with colorful ideas

WE'VE been told that there's one ambitious young man in Sydney who despite his fairly low salary decided to make himself stand out from the rut.

Apparently the office he works in is small, and is more or less a passageway to that of his boss.

The young chap decided to smarten his own room up, bought pots of paint, stayed back at night for a week, painted each wall a different color and refurbished his office completely. He then spent £25 on an executive-type, glass-topped desk.

He now sits at the desk in some style, to the astonishment of visitors—and the boss.

The boss still has his old room and it hasn't much color.

* * *

A TENPENNY greeting card has travelled 288,000 miles on its 13 journeys between Sydney and London.

Back in 1942 a Sydney woman posted it to her sister in Britain, who dated the back of the card and returned it in time for our Sydney friend's birthday. Now a long-standing family joke, the card has just been dated for the 13th time, and is on its way to Britain with their Christmas mail.

Adventure on the road to Rome

HITCH-HIKING along the Italian coast, two Australian girls we know got a lift in a car from a man who hardly spoke until a glorious view of the sea appeared.

"La mer," he said, chanting the words of the song which Frenchman Charles Trenet composed and made a hit.

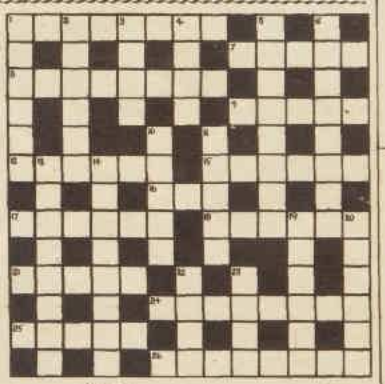
"My song," he added.

"Ours, too. We love it," chorused the girls, bursting into song with voices which could have been heard across a 40-acre paddock.

After a while the driver made himself heard again. "My song," he repeated.

Then it dawned on them. The driver was Charles Trenet.

THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Expressions of blame (8).
7. Sleeping accommodation seemingly for a kangaroo saint (5).
8. Flower which could ruin a gem (8).
9. Passenger cars are brick when overturned (5).
12. Rodman in a tangle could be left to chance (6).
15. Can be father or mother, but it seems that the periodic payment is associated with father (8).
16. This one is a champion (3).
17. The energy of our age (6).
18. The head of a four-footer provides it, yet the head is a six-fouter (6).
21. Kitchen implements, then why follow them to get a flower (5).
24. Toady sometimes lives on a tree (8).
25. Gather a harvest even if it is mostly meagre (5).
26. Expectation for reduced speculation before tea (8).

Solution will be published next week.

DOWN

1. Dodge our harshness (8).
2. You walk up steps to this platform in front of door (6).
3. Possesses in show (4).
4. Fishing net in the chimney (4).
5. Decay follows an English private Nemesmel (5, 3).
6. Bind together with scarcely more than a twine (8).
10. Slap a typical Scot in the middle (5).
11. Utter the sign of the plural on the top (5).
13. For the time being (8).
14. Does this record commemorate a stately building? (8).
19. The French peevishness is unstable (6).
20. Modern concerning coin (6).
22. Something you have to keep on in order to keep cool (4).
23. They are maddening in the belfry and are a blow to your feelings if turned (4).



Solution to last week's crossword.

THINK TWICE!

Use the only deodorant with "Action Proof" Protection

Your most effective deodorant for checking perspiration and its offending odour.
Because only Odo-Ro-No has this new "Action-Proof" formula! Vastly superior to anything you've ever seen before! Use Odo-Ro-No daily and be confident of complete 24-hour protection—no matter how active you are!



People on-the-go use ODO-RO-NO POSITIVELY Most Effective!



Regular Habits

Ensure that baby has regular habits by using Steedman's famous powders. Even during the difficult teething period, baby can be happy and contented. Steedman's safely and gently cool the bloodstream — from teething time up to 14 years of age.

Write now to "Steedmans, Box 1757Q, G.P.O. Melbourne" for free booklet "Hints to Mothers".

Give STEEDMAN'S POWDERS for Regularity

AT ALL CHEMISTS

Made in England.



BABY LOVES the delightful, creamy lather of Cuticura Soap. The gentle cleansing and pure, soothing touch of this mildly medicated Soap is ideal for your baby's precious skin.

Use emollient Cuticura Ointment after the bath and at every change to soothe baby's soreness and heal sweetly with nappie rash. Buy your Cuticura today.

Cuticura SOAP

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The Queen's life story

Castle dungeon sheltered little Princesses

Young Princess Elizabeth was always careful to carry her personal treasures with her when, during the war, she and her sister, Princess Margaret, went down at night to the ancient dungeon at Windsor Castle, which had been made into an air-raid shelter for them.

"I couldn't bear to lose my special things," Princess Elizabeth would say as she carefully packed in a linen bag her gold wristlet watch, her pearls, and favorite ornaments before descending the stone steps.

HIGHLIGHTS of the Queen's girlhood, which, as Princess Elizabeth, she spent at Windsor Castle during the war, are described in this third instalment of our delightful series by English author Margaret Saville.

By *MARGARET SAVILLE*

PRINCESS ELIZABETH and Princess Margaret were evacuated to the Royal Lodge at Windsor Castle soon after the outbreak of war in September, 1939, although the King and Queen remained in London.

The stout old castle was much safer for the Royal sisters than London during air-raids, but several times the German bombers did strike at the surrounding district.

At the little Royal Lodge in the historic old castle Princess Elizabeth grew up.

Unlike some teen-age girls, she never seemed gawky or uncertain. Always she was a real Princess, tall and slim and often a little serious, conscious of her new responsibility, "now that I have Margaret to look after so much," as she said.

Ready to make her first broadcast to the children of the nation when she was only 14, Princess Elizabeth studied industriously for days in advance, and rehearsed with a mock microphone.

"You'll soon be good enough for I.T.M.A.," remarked the lively Princess Margaret, referring to their favorite radio programme.

But it was all laying the foundations of the clear, bell-like voice and serene public poise which characterise the Queen today. Then, as now, she was always conscientious and thorough. Even as a schoolgirl she knew there were heavy Royal responsibilities to be fulfilled in the future.

"I should think you're a bit frightened to grow up," one of her girl friends said to her.

"Oh, no," Princess Elizabeth replied. "It's my job, so of course I must do it."

Whenever possible the King and Queen joined their daughters at the weekend. Then they would all spend Sunday in a happy domestic manner at the Royal Lodge.

But with motherly concern, the then Queen would feel worried that her daughters were not getting all the social life they needed, especially Princess Elizabeth.

So both the King and Queen agreed cheerfully when it was proposed to organise a Christmas pantomime in aid of war charities, in which the two Princesses could act with a number of their local friends.

"They must mix more," the Queen remarked. "After all, it won't be long now before Lilibet is old enough to come out."

According to Court usage, Royal personages attain full adult age at 18, not 21 like other people, and the Queen thought the war would probably be over in good time for her daughter to be given a State Ball and all the other presentation festivities as she formally entered society. But this was not to happen.

"I never came out at all," the Queen has said. "I just happened along and here I am!"

A grand performance of "Cinderella" took place in the historic Waterloo Chamber of Windsor Castle on that same stage where Queen Victoria's family used to hold their "genteel charades." Princess Elizabeth was a dashing Prince Charming in her black tights and velvet jacket.

Charity shows became a feature of the castle life, and the various members of the Royal Family would travel to join the audiences.

One evening Lord and Lady Louis Mountbatten arrived with their nephew, Prince Philip of Greece, in his naval uniform; he was enjoying a short shore leave.

As Prince Philip was among the weekend guests at the castle, he and Princess Elizabeth went to church side by side on Sunday morning, and later she showed him round the gardens.

They struck up an easy friendship, and when Prince Philip returned to his ship they corresponded in a casual way.

Princess Elizabeth was pleased to have another friend in uniform to whom she could write now and then—perhaps enclosing some family snapshots she had taken—or send a parcel of sweets and cigarettes and a cake she had baked.

As she said to the King: "After all, it's the proper thing to do in wartime."

Presently Prince Philip was posted off to the Pacific, and their letters became less frequent.

Serving thousands of miles away in H.M.S. Whelp, in which he visited Australia, Prince Philip one day opened an envelope addressed by his pretty kinswoman, and learned she had just put on uniform.



SECOND-SUBALTERN in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, Princess Elizabeth, then 18, at work repairing an engine.

"And now I am learning to drive a car and to do all the running repairs, which will certainly be a useful accomplishment for me," Princess Elizabeth wrote.

At 18 she had joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service, and was now an officer-cadet.

"I ought to do as other girls of my age do," she had said to the King, who at first had been reluctant to let the Heiress to the Crown tinker with heavy lorries, eat in a communal mess, and drill on the barrack square.

Princess Elizabeth stayed proudly in khaki until the war with Germany ended in May, 1945, when she and Princess Margaret returned to Buckingham Palace.

Now aged 19, she was a real Royal lady with her own little private suite at the Palace, fulfilling her first formal public engagements.

Service men and women were returning home.

"Philip will soon be back, I suppose," Princess Elizabeth said idly. "I wonder if he has changed at all."

Next Week: Part 4. The Royal Romance.

Wisdom toothbrushes top the poll in "Australia's Amateur Hour"!

Terry Dear and three of the artists on "Australia's Amateur Hour", tried three Wisdom toothbrushes each. A Flexi-brush, a nylon bristle Wisdom, (both with safe "round-ended" bristles, that enable you to brush gums as well as teeth) a pure bristle Wisdom. Read what Terry and his artists had to say.

Terry Dear

"We all like Wisdom's gem-cut handles and jewel colors. I find the crystal-plastic pack very handy for travelling. Wisdom's the *only* brand that really safeguards your smile. So try the toothbrush test yourself—you'll be a Wisdom fan, too."



PIANO ACCORDIONIST

"I tickle my ivories with the Wisdom Flexi-brush. Twice as many bristles to penetrate between teeth."

LIONEL ROSS—Programme No. 652.



HILLBILLY

"Bein' a natural man, I plumps for them that natural Wisdom bristles to tone up my gum tissues: Wisdom toothbrushes have everything.

FRANK IFIELD—Programme No. 612



SOPRANO

"Wisdom has its own hit parade. Hard, medium or soft — there's a Wisdom to suit *everyone* — And Wisdom's 'round-ended' bristles mean sparkling teeth in healthy gums."

STEPHANIE DEBRET—Programme No. 644

Wisdom

Toothbrushes by Addis

with "round-ended" Bristles

(in the Crystal-plastic pack)

Wisdom Regular . . . 2/–

Wisdom Flexibrush . . 2/4

Wisdom Pure Bristle, 2/6

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"Beaverlure" Reg

"Ter-ray"

No Ironing!



Ter-ray Dressing Gown with contrast lined hood. Smart and pretty for beach or house. From 4 to 12 years. From 30/11.

A and B Beaverlure boleros to pop over when the cool breezes blow. For lasses from 3 to 14 years. In 15 enchanting colours. From 17/6.

Ter-ray Playsuit to please girls from 3 years onwards. From 55/6.

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AT ALL GOOD STORES LOOK FOR THIS LABEL

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BARBECUE. Marya Crawford and Peter Wilson at the "Bali Ha'i" barbecue given by the Kambala Old Girls' Union at the J. S. Wilcox' home at Darling Point.



AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR to America, Sir Percy Spender, and Lady Spender leave the Embassy, Washington, to attend President Eisenhower's reception for diplomats.



WED IN MELBOURNE. Lindsay Parker, of Sydney, and his bride at their wedding reception at Menzies Hotel, which followed the ceremony at St. Kilda Synagogue. Mrs. Parker was formerly Joan Michaelis, second daughter of Sir Archie and Lady Michaelis, of Melbourne.

SOCIAL JOTTINGS

CLOTHES, accessories, household novelties, and knick-knacks from abroad have a very understandable attraction for tourists, and most people who travel overseas come home laden with souvenirs to bring back memories of their trip.

Mrs. Bobby Brash, who has recently arrived in Sydney from ten months in England and on the Continent, came home with a cosmopolitan wardrobe—suits from London, accessories from Paris, and shoes from Italy.

Mr. and Mrs. Brash returned via Singapore, and Mrs. Brash tells me they stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Birch, and had a wonderful few days there.

• • •

HAND-PAINTED skirt from Mexico in black and white with touches of citron-yellow —and complete with matadors and charging bulls—was one of the mementoes brought home by Mrs. Roy McCaughey, of "Coonong," Narrandera, who arrived in Sydney with her husband a few weeks ago. Mr. and Mrs. McCaughey spent most of their time in South America, visiting cattle ranches, but also visited England, Scotland, and Ireland, where Mrs. McCaughey did some research for the book she has just finished — a biography of her husband's uncle, well-known pastoralist the late Sir Samuel McCaughey.

• • •

MRS. BEN FULLER tells me that her son-in-law and daughter, D'Arcy and Pat Ryan, are staying with her in Point Piper till the house they have bought in Wynua Road, Point Piper, is renovated.



TAMWORTH MATRONS' BALL. Mrs. Rex Coventry (left) and Mr. Coventry with Mrs. Alan Stevenson at the Matrons' Ball, which was held in the Tamworth City Memorial Hall.

IT was destination Paris for Ian and Myra Rutherford after their wedding at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, last month. Ian and Myra plan to make their home in Sydney, and will join the Oronsay in Naples, arriving here on Christmas Eve. Myra went to England about 12 months ago, and her mother, Mrs. D. McLaughlin, of Balgowlah, is very excited at the thought of seeing her daughter.

ON his arrival in Sydney from Italy recently, Mr. Guiseppe Bianchi met his future son-in-law, Robert Corrigan, for the first time. Robert will marry Bianca Bianchi at St. Martin's, Turramurra, on December 4. The wedding will really be a family affair, as the bridesmaid is Merren Waters, who is engaged to Bianca's brother, Franco.

• • •

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH Mittagong, will be the scene of a pretty wedding this Saturday, November 28, when Jacqueline Emmett marries Captain Peter Norton. Jackie, who is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Emmett, of "Hawthorns," Mittagong, will be attended by her sister, Peta, and Christine Knight.

• • •

A BUSY time lies ahead of Helen Kinross, who returned home a few weeks ago from six months spent in England and on the Continent. Helen has just joined the energetic Haywire Committee. They're organising a Christmas party, which will be held at the New Commodore on December 9, and proceeds will aid the Anti-T.B. Association.

Anne



PRE-CHRISTMAS PARTY. Anne (centre) and Pat Fairlie-Cuninghame (right) with Jennifer Tatchell, Malcolm Bryden-Brown (second from left), and Joe Croft at the party given by Pat and Anne at their Darling Point home.



COUNTRY WEDDING. Mrs. David Thompson with bridesmaids Rosemary Richards (left) and Ann King. Bride was Pat Robertson, of Mittagong.



TRIO. Mrs. Erik Trolle-Hansen (left), Mrs. Cliff Paray, and Anne McCauley at the party given by the Netherlands Consul, Mr. H. E. van Ravenstein, and his wife at their Vaucluse home.



ALL NATIONS FAIR. Mrs. C. I. D. Hutcheson (left), Mrs. Guy Le Marchand, and Mrs. Michael Jones admire one of the dolls from the Collaroy Torchbearers for Legacy's stall, "Dollyville Cottage," at the fair, held at the Trocadero.

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Christmas Cookery

A dinner that follows traditional lines and is not hard to prepare will help to make a happy Christmas Day.

IF you are one of those who like Christmas dinner hot, you will appreciate the menu we have planned for you.

So much can be cooked beforehand that very little time need be spent in the kitchen on Christmas Day.

Sauce for the oyster cocktail, soup (up to the stage where the wine is added), ham and asparagus ramekins, seasoning for the duck, and brandy sauce or hard sauce for the plum pudding may all be made the day before; the pudding can be made weeks ahead and only needs re-boiling for a couple of hours.

So plan, order, and prepare well ahead and Christmas will be a care-free time for you as well as for the family.

Menu

Oyster Cocktail
Spicy Tomato Soup
Ham and Asparagus Ramekins
Roast Duck with Orange Sauce
Baked Vegetables, Green Peas
Plum Pudding with Hard Sauce

Special Feature

OYSTER COCKTAIL

Two dozen oysters, 1½ teaspoons prepared horseradish sauce, 1 tablespoon vinegar, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce, ¼ cup tomato puree, salt to taste, lemon, parsley.

Remove beards from oysters, arrange 4 or more oysters in each serving glass. Mix remaining ingredients, chill thoroughly, spoon over oysters just before serving. Garnish with lemon and parsley.

SPICY TOMATO SOUP

Two onions, 1oz. butter, 1 large tin tomatoes, 1qt. poultry stock (or use prepared chicken noodle soup made up to 1qt. with water), 1 teaspoon paprika, 2 tablespoons flour, 2 tablespoons sago, sprig of parsley and thyme tied together with a bay leaf, 1 large glass port wine, blade of mace or ¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg, thin piece lemon rind, salt and pepper.

Slice onions thinly, saute in melted butter until soft and yellow, but not browned. Stir in flour, cook 2 or 3 minutes longer without browning. Add tomatoes, stock, paprika, herbs, mace or nutmeg, lemon rind, salt and pepper. Simmer ½ hour, rub through strainer. Return to clean saucepan, with washed sago, simmer until sago is clear. Add port wine, correct seasoning, serve piping hot.

HAM AND ASPARAGUS RAMEKINS

One and a half cups medium thickness white sauce, ½lb. chopped ham, 1 teaspoon mixed mustard, squeeze lemon juice, pinch cayenne pepper, ½ tin asparagus spears (reserving some tips for garnishing), soft breadcrumbs, butter.

Mix sauce, ham, mustard, lemon juice, cayenne pepper, and chopped asparagus spears. Fill into greased ramekin dishes. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs, dot with butter. Re-heat and lightly brown tops in oven. Garnish with asparagus tips.

ROAST DUCK WITH ORANGE SAUCE

One 4lb. to 4½lb. duck, cut clove of garlic, 1 tablespoon butter or substitute, 1 tablespoon chopped onion, 1½ cups soft breadcrumbs, 1½ cups chopped green apple, ½ cup chopped celery, 1 egg-yolk, ½ teaspoon salt, pinch cayenne pepper, ½ teaspoon grated lemon rind, orange slices, bacon, cress.

Wash and dry duck inside and out. Rub outside surface lightly with cut clove of garlic. Melt butter, add onion, brown lightly. Stir in all other ingredients (except orange slices, bacon, and cress), fill into duck. Truss, place on rack in uncovered baking-dish with ½in. melted fat in bottom. Bake in moderate oven 2 to 2½ hours, allowing 25 to 30 minutes per pound. Baste frequently, or bird may be wrapped in greased brown paper which is removed for the last half-hour. At the same time drain the fat off and add 1 cup orange juice. Baste bird every 10 minutes with the orange juice. To prevent legs of bird drying out during cooking wrap in fat bacon. Serve on hot dish with orange slices, cress, and orange sauce.

Orange Sauce: Strain liquid in pan, and make up to desired quantity with equal parts of water and orange juice. Make rich brown gravy in the usual way, using this liquid instead of stock or water.

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DINNER is the highlight of Christmas Day, and this one is just what you are looking for. Dishes illustrated are oyster cocktail, ham and asparagus ramekins, roast duck, and plum pudding with hard sauce. Other dishes are included in the menu.



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BY OUR FOOD AND COOKERY EXPERTS

Cold dishes are appetising for a festive Christmas buffet.

THE menu below is for the main meal of the day, and the dishes, being cold, reduce work to a minimum on the day they are to be served.

This means that the last few days before Christmas are busy, because some of the preparation must be done beforehand.

But it also means that on December 25 you can relax and really enjoy Christmas Day with your family and friends.

Cold Buffet

Grapefruit Cocktail
Glazed Tongue, Sliced Ham, Chicken
Green Salad
Potato Salad
Plum Pudding Ice
Cheese Straws
Nuts



GLAZED TONGUE, the centrepiece of the meat platter above, is too attractive to cut until the holly decoration has been admired. Served with ham, chicken, and salad it is delicious. Other dishes illustrated are grapefruit cocktail and cheese straws. See menu on this page.

GRAPEFRUIT COCKTAIL

Two large grapefruit, sugar, sherry (may be omitted), orange juice, cherries or strawberries and mint to garnish.

Peel grapefruit, remove as much pith and skin as possible. Cut each segment into 2 or 3 pieces, arrange in cocktail glasses. Fifteen minutes before serving, dust lightly with sugar, add a little sherry to each glass, and extra orange or grapefruit juice. Chill. Serve garnished with cherries or strawberries and mint.

GLAZED TONGUE

One ox tongue (1 or 2 calves' tongues or 4 or 5 sheep's tongues may be added if a larger quantity is required), 3 cloves, 5 or 6 peppercorns, 1 blade of mace.

Aspic Jelly: Two dessertspoons gelatine, 1¼ cups cold water, ¼ cup hot water, 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar, 3 cloves (blossom end removed), 3 thin strips lemon rind, 1 dessertspoon lemon juice, 2 thin slices onion, 2 sprigs parsley, 1 teaspoon salt.

Decorations: Green pepper, red pepper, or firm tomato pieces.

Wash ox tongue well, place in warm water to cover with all other ingredients except calves' or sheep's tongues. Bring slowly to the boil and cook gently 2½ to 3 hours according to size, removing scum as it rises and adding calves' tongues or sheep's tongues when ox tongue has been cooking about ¾ to 1 hour. Drain, when cool enough to handle skin tongues and remove root ends. Pack into a tongue presser or a basin with a saucer or plate and a weight on top. Leave to cool and set overnight.

Aspic Jelly: Soak gelatine in hot water. Place all other ingredients into saucepan, beat lightly with fork until boiling, add soaked gelatine. Cool and strain through fine strainer lined with clean cloth. When cold and beginning to thicken, glaze and decorate tongue as follows.

To Glaze and Decorate Tongue: Arrange a pattern on top of pressed tongue using green and red pepper. Coat with a thin layer of aspic, allow to set before adding another thin coating of jelly.

GREEN SALAD

In a large, low salad bowl or on a large salad platter arrange crisp lettuce leaves, tomato wedges, celery curls, blocks of cheese, slices of cucumber, asparagus sticks, cress, olives or any other ingredients.

POTATO SALAD

Four cups diced cooked potato, ¾ cup finely diced celery, 3 or 4 finely chopped shallots, 1 tablespoon finely chopped young mint, ½ cup mayonnaise, 1 or 2 hard-boiled eggs.

Place potatoes into a large bowl with celery, shallots, and mint. Add mayonnaise, toss lightly to mix. Turn into salad bowl, garnish with sliced or quartered hard-boiled eggs.

MAYONNAISE

Two egg-yolks, ½ teaspoon mixed mustard, 2 tablespoons white vinegar, ½ pint lucca or salad oil, ½ teaspoon sugar, salt, cayenne.

Break egg-yolks with a fork but do not beat. Add oil a few drops at a time, stirring until well mixed and thick. Add vinegar drop by drop, stirring one way only, then add sugar and season with mustard, salt, and cayenne.

BOILED SALAD DRESSING

Two tablespoons butter or margarine, 1 egg, ¾ cup milk, 1 tablespoon sugar (quantity may be increased according to taste), ½ teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon mustard, 2 tablespoons vinegar.

Melt butter, add beaten egg, milk, sugar, salt, and mustard. Stir in vinegar a little at a time. Cook over gently boiling water about 20 minutes, stirring continuously. This dressing keeps well if stored in a screw-top jar in refrigerator or ice-chest.

PLUM PUDDING ICE

Two ounces chopped seeded raisins, 1 tablespoon currants, 1 tablespoon shredded blanched almonds, 1 tablespoon chopped peel, 1 tablespoon chopped maraschino or glace cherries, 1 wineglass (about 2 tablespoons) brandy, 4 egg-yolks, 2 tablespoons sugar, 3oz. chocolate, 1 pint milk, ½ pint cream (more if possible), 2 teaspoons coffee essence.

Soak raisins, currants, almonds, peel, and cherries overnight in the brandy. Beat egg-yolks with sugar, add milk heated with grated chocolate until chocolate dissolves. Stir over boiling water until slightly thickened. Fold in whipped cream and coffee essence. Freeze in refrigerator trays until very thick, fold in soaked fruit, return to refrigerator trays and freeze until very thick. Pile roughly into serving dishes and serve at once.

CHEESE STRAWS

Two tablespoons butter or substitute, 1½ cups plain flour, salt, cayenne pepper, 3oz. dry grated cheese, 1 egg-yolk, squeeze of lemon juice.

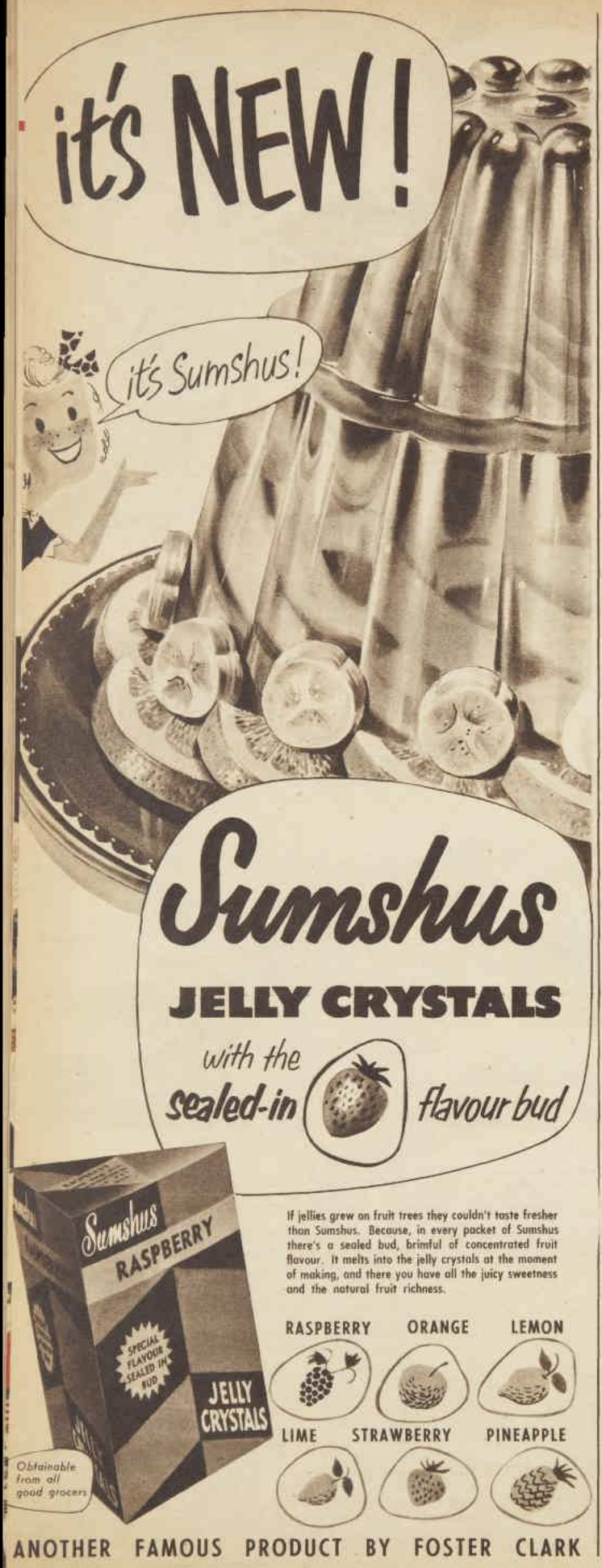
Rub shortening into sifted dry ingredients until mixture is like coarse breadcrumbs, add cheese. Work in beaten egg-yolk mixed with lemon juice, making a firm, stiff dough. Turn on to lightly floured board, roll to ⅛in. thickness. Cut into thin narrow strips about 3in. by ¼in. Lift carefully on to scone tray, bake in very moderate oven until lightly colored. Re-roll balance of mixture and cut small circles about 1½in. in size, using two cutters, one smaller than the other. Bake in the same way as the straws, allowing both to remain on the tin until quite cold. Serve a bundle of straws through each of the circles.

MOCK HAM

Choose a plump leg of lamb and have the butcher pump it well with brine solution. Soak 1 hour in cold water, wipe dry. Rub well with a cut lemon, then smear lightly with mixed mustard. Roll 1lb. scone dough to good ¼in. thickness, mould

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Christmas recipes

● Recipes for plum pudding (hot or jellied), poultry, shortbread, and mince pies are in demand as the Christmas season approaches. Here we offer you a selection of reliable recipes to help you with your Christmas catering.

SHORTBREAD and fruit mince for the mince pies may be made well in advance provided they are properly stored. Shortbread should be placed in an airtight tin, fruit mince in a screw-top jar.

Spoon measurements in all our recipes are level.

SCOTCH SHORTBREAD

Four ounces butter or substitute, 2oz. castor sugar, 4oz. plain flour, 2oz. ground rice, pinch salt.

Cream butter or substitute with sugar until soft, white, and fluffy. Gradually work in flour sifted with ground rice and salt. Press into square greased tin, prick with a fork, mark lightly into finger lengths or small squares. Or the mixture may be turned on to a lightly floured board, rolled or pressed to ¾in. thickness, cut into shapes, and baked on a flat tray. Cook in moderate oven 15 to 20 minutes if mixture is cut into fingers; 25 to 30 minutes if mixture is in one tin.

MINCE TART

Pastry: Quarter-pound butter or substitute, 3 tablespoons castor sugar, good pinch grated lemon rind, 1 egg-yolk, 1½ cups plain flour, 1½ teaspoons baking powder, pinch salt.

Fruit Mince: Three-quarter cup mixed fruit (or use ¼ cup each sultanas, currants, and raisins), 2 tablespoons finely shredded peel, 1 large apple (peeled, cored, and cut into fine dice), good squeeze lemon juice, pinch spice and nutmeg, 1 tablespoon butter or substitute, 2oz. brown sugar. Or use 1 cup prepared fruit mince in place of the ingredients listed.

Place filling ingredients into a saucepan, stir over low heat until well mixed and softened. Allow to cool. Prepare pastry. Cream butter or substitute with sugar and lemon rind. Add egg-yolk, mix well. Work in sifted flour, baking powder, and salt, *making a dry dough.* Turn on to floured board, knead lightly, divide into two portions, one slightly larger than the other. Roll both pieces thinly. Line a 7in. tart plate with the larger portion, moisten edges. Fill with cold fruit mince, cover with second piece of pastry, pressing edges together. Trim edges and pinch a frill. Brush lightly with water, sprinkle with sugar, prick with fork or cut 2 small slits in the top. Bake in hot oven 25 to 30 minutes, reducing heat slightly after first 15 minutes. When quite cold store in airtight tin.

JELLIED CHRISTMAS PUDDING

Two tablespoons gelatine, ¼ cup boiling water, 1 tablespoon cocoa, ¾ pint milk, ¼ cup mixed peel, ½ cup raisins, ¼ cup chopped figs, 4 tablespoons sugar, ¾ pint strong black coffee, ½ teaspoon vanilla, few drops almond essence, ½ cup stewed cherries (well drained from syrup), 2 tablespoons brandy or sherry.

Soften gelatine in ¼ cup boiling water. Blend cocoa with milk, bring to the boil. Add peel, raisins, figs, and sugar. Simmer 5 minutes. When cool add coffee, gelatine, essences, cherries, and brandy or sherry. Pour into wetted mould, chill until set.

CHRISTMAS CAKE

Half pound butter or substitute, ½lb. brown sugar, 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind, grated rind of ½ orange, 1 tablespoon plum jam, 1 teaspoon Parisian essence, 4 eggs, 3lb. mixed fruit (or use ½lb. currants, 1lb. sultanas, ½lb. raisins, ½lb. drained or glace cherries, and ½lb. shredded peel), 10oz. plain flour, ½ teaspoon bicarbonate soda, 1 teaspoon nutmeg, ½ teaspoon salt, 4 tablespoons sherry.

Cream butter or substitute with sugar, lemon and orange rind. Add jam and Parisian essence, mix well. Add unbeaten eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Fold in fruit alternately with sifted dry ingredients and sherry. Fill into square or round 8in. cake-tin lined with 2 layers of brown and 1 layer of white paper. Bake in slow oven 3½ to 4 hours. Allow to cool in tin, wrap in large clean towel when quite cold.

JELLIED CHICKEN SALAD

One pint meat or vegetable stock, 2 tablespoons gelatine, ½ cup diced celery, ½ cup grated carrot, 1 finely diced gherkin, ½ cup mayonnaise, 1½ cups diced cooked chicken.

Soak gelatine in ½ cup of the stock. Heat balance of stock to simmering point, add soaked gelatine, stir until dissolved. When cooled and beginning to thicken fold in celery, carrot, gherkin, mayonnaise, and poultry. Fill into wetted mould, chill until set. Unmould on to bed of lettuce leaves, garnish with any other salad ingredients desired.

HOT DINNERS

Continued from page 38

Simmer until slightly reduced and thickened, add sufficient grated orange rind to flavor. Serve hot.

PLUM PUDDING

Half-pound butter or substitute, ½lb. brown sugar, grated rind of ½ orange, 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind, 4 large eggs, 1½lb. mixed fruit, ½lb. shredded peel, 4oz. breadcrumbs, 4oz. flour, pinch salt, 1 teaspoon nutmeg, 1 teaspoon spice, ½ teaspoon bicarbonate soda, 2oz. chopped blanched almonds, 3 tablespoons brandy, scrubbed threepences or trinkets as desired.

Cream butter or substitute with brown sugar, grated orange and lemon rinds. Add unbeaten eggs one at a time, mix well. Mix in fruit, add peel. Fold in breadcrumbs, almonds, sifted dry ingredients, trinkets, or threepences, and, lastly, brandy. Mix well together, allow to stand ½ to ¾ hour. Fill into greased basin. Tie floured pudding cloth securely over top. Plunge into boiling water, boil rapidly 5 hours. Boil 2 to 2½ hours on day of serving. Serve with thin brandy sauce or with hard sauce.

HARD SAUCE

One-third cup butter, 1 cup sifted icing sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla, pinch nutmeg, 1 tablespoon fresh cream.

Cream butter until very soft, gradually add icing sugar, then cream, vanilla, and nutmeg. Beat until fluffy. Pile lightly into serving-dish, chill until cold but not hard. This is sufficient for 4 to 6 servings. Brandy may be added a few drops at a time if desired.

THIN BRANDY SAUCE

Half-pint water, 1 tablespoon arrowroot or cornflour, 1 tablespoon sugar, 3 tablespoons brandy.

Blend cornflour with a little extra water. Bring sugar and water to boiling point, stir in blended cornflour, continue stirring while mixture simmers 2 or 3 minutes. Add brandy, serve hot.

Cold Dinners

Continued from page 39

around the leg. Place in thickly greased baking-dish in very moderate oven and bake until tender when pierced with a fine steel knitting needle—allow about 35 minutes per pound. Remove scone mixture when meat is tender, brush meat with melted shortening, and coat with browned breadcrumbs. Stick with cloves, allow to become quite cold before serving.

BAKED HAM

Soak strongly cured ham 12 hours, scrub rind, rinse well. Roll 2lb. scone dough (unsweetened) to barely ¼in. thickness, mould around ham. Place in thickly greased baking-dish, and bake uncovered in a slow oven (325 deg.), allowing 30 to 40 minutes per pound. The smaller the ham the longer the time allowed per pound. For a 12lb. to 15lb. ham, 25 minutes per pound may be sufficient. Test with a fine steel knitting needle about ½ hour before end of cooking time. If tender, strip off paste and rind of ham, then cover ham with spiced brown sugar, stick with cloves, and baste 2 or 3 times during the next half-hour's cooking time with cider, apple juice, or orange juice. A little lemon juice may be mixed with the orange juice if desired.

N.S.W.

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Merry Christmas

BY OUR FOOD AND COOKERY EXPERTS



FRUIT PUNCH, cool and refreshing, an attractive Christmas cake, and small fancy cakes are fine fare for Christmas callers. See recipes below.

● One of the nicest things about Christmas is the "popping in" of seldom-seen friends and neighbors. Of course you offer them a slice of cake and a cup of tea or a long cold drink when you wish them a "Merry Christmas."

Special Feature

FOR a cake that you will be proud to serve, try our recipe for light Christmas cake —it is delicious and different.

All fruit cakes improve in flavor and cut more smoothly if made several weeks before they are required, but the icing and decorating should be left until two or three days before the cake is to be cut.

Other recipes below will be helpful during the festive season.

Note: Spoon measurements in all our recipes refer to level spoons.

LIGHT CHRISTMAS CAKE

Eight ounces butter or substitute, 6oz. brown sugar, 4oz. white sugar, 1 dessertspoon grated lemon rind, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 5 eggs, 5 tablespoons sherry, 8oz. cherries, 8oz. finely shredded peel, 4oz. walnuts and almonds mixed, ¼lb. sultanas, ¼lb. raisins, 12oz. plain flour, ½ teaspoon baking powder, pinch salt, 1 teaspoon mixed spice.

Cream butter or substitute with brown and white sugars, lemon rind, and vanilla. Add unbeaten eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Mix cherries, peel, nuts, and fruit well together, add to the creamed mixture. Fold in half the sifted dry ingredients, then sherry, then balance of dry ingredients. Fill into 8½in. square or round tin lined with 2 layers brown and 1 layer white paper. Bake in very moderate oven 3 to 3¼ hours. Allow to cool in tin, when quite cold wrap cake in large clean towel until ready to ice and decorate.

ALMOND PASTE

One pound icing sugar, 4oz. almond meal, 2 egg-yolks, 2 tablespoons sherry, squeeze orange or lemon juice, almond essence if desired.

Sift icing sugar, add almond meal. Stir in egg-yolks beaten with sherry and orange or lemon juice, mix to a stiff paste, adding more fruit juice if required. If strong almond flavor is liked, add few drops almond essence. Knead slightly on board coated lightly with icing sugar. Roll out to ¼in. thickness. Glaze cake with egg-white or warmed apricot jam. Lift paste on to cake, smooth surface with hands dusted with icing sugar. Trim base with knife. For easier handling icing may be cut in two portions and lifted on to cake half at a time, moulding so that join is smooth.

COVERING ICING

Two egg-whites, 4oz. glucose, 2lb. icing sugar, ½ teaspoon lemon juice, few drops vanilla essence, green coloring.

Break egg-whites slightly with fork, do not beat to a froth. Pour into well in centre of sifted icing sugar. Add melted glucose, vanilla, and lemon juice. Gradually work in icing sugar, until all is absorbed. Knead on board dusted with sifted icing sugar until smooth and pliable. Add coloring a few drops at a time, kneading in well until desired color is reached and color is even. Roll out to good ¼in. thickness. Moisten covered cake with egg-white, lift icing on to cake, moulding and trimming as given for almond paste. Leave 24 hours.

To decorate: One egg-white, 8oz. to 10oz. icing sugar, 1 small teaspoon glucose, few drops lemon juice, green coloring, 1yd. red satin ribbon 1in. wide, 3 sprays holly.

Prepare icing. Break egg-white slightly with fork. Add melted glucose and lemon juice. Gradually work in sifted icing sugar, mixing with wooden spoon until icing is smooth, shiny, and thick enough to hold its shape. Color pale green to match cake. Write "Christmas Greetings" on piece of thin paper, place on top of cake and prick outline lightly on to cake with pin. Remove paper, and following pin pricks write the words with prepared icing, using medium-sized writing pipe. Decorate as illustrated. To keep scrolls even, first mark outer edge of cake into 16 equal sections. Use each mark as a guide for piping scrolls. Place cake on platter, decorate with ribbon and holly leaves.

NOUGAT TARTLETS

Six ounces biscuit pastry, apricot jam, 1 cup dry cake crumbs, 2 tablespoons almond meal, 3 tablespoons sugar, 1 egg, 2 tablespoons orange juice.

Roll pastry thinly, line small patty-tins. Place small dab of jam in bottom of each. Beat egg with sugar, add cake crumbs, almond meal, and orange juice. Mix well, fill into tart-cases. Bake in hot oven 12 to 15 minutes, reducing heat after first 5 minutes. Roll balance of pastry thinly, cut into circles, bake in moderate oven 7 to 10 minutes. Join in pairs with cream or jam, ice and decorate as desired. When cold, coat some of the tartlets with icing, decorate with nuts, etc. Place dab of cream on others; chill before icing.

FESTIVE CAKES

Three ounces butter or substitute, 2oz. sugar, vanilla, 1 egg, 4oz. self-raising flour, 3 tablespoons milk, cream, almond paste, warmed jam, cinnamon or cocoa.

Cream shortening with sugar and vanilla. Add egg, beat well. Fold in sifted flour alternately with milk. Fill into greased 8in. sandwich-tin, bake in moderate oven 25 to 30 minutes. When cool, trim to a square shape, brush with warmed jam, cover with thinly rolled almond paste. Cut into finger lengths, decorate as desired.

Use trimmings of cake to make "potatoes." Cut cake into small rounds, top with dab of cream, brush with jam, cover with almond paste, and dust with cinnamon or cocoa.

FRUIT PUNCH

One pineapple, 3 lemons, 3 oranges, 4 pints water, 2½ cups sugar, 4 passionfruit, 1/3 cup raspberry syrup, lemon slices.

Peel pineapple. Grate half. Cut remainder into dice. Place grated pineapple and skin into saucepan with grated rind of oranges and lemons, sugar, and water. Simmer 20 minutes. Strain and cool. Add the orange and lemon juice, diced pineapple, passionfruit pulp, and raspberry syrup. Chill before serving diluted with ginger ale, lemonade, or iced water. Garnish with lemon.

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Set for Summer!

Jelly Layer Dessert

(JELLY WITH ICE CREAM)

1 raspberry or strawberry jelly crystal or tablet, 1 pint vanilla ice cream mixture.

Prepare jelly according to directions; leave until thickening. Prepare ice cream mixture, freeze to a mush. Refill the trays with alternate layers of ice cream and thick jelly. Finish freezing. For variety add a layer of sweet wafer crumbs, too.

A "Quick Trick" Dessert



So easy, so good, so tempting, all desserts made from jelly crystals or tablets are delicious summer foods...

JELLIES

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PRIZE RECIPES

Creamy mocha tartlets

Mocha tarts, delicious for afternoon tea or supper or as a sweet with ice-cream, top the prize list in this week's contest. They consist of spicy biscuit crumb cases filled with a rich mocha cream.

THE biscuit crumb shells contain melted shortening and therefore need to be stored in ice-chest or refrigerator, otherwise they soften and become difficult to handle.

The utility mixture, which wins a consolation prize, makes an apple charlotte, 1 dozen date fold-ups, and 1 dozen raspberry buns from the one mixture. Use this mixture often. It provides variety and saves time in preparation, too.

Oven-cooked, crisp fish cakes and a savory shortcake with two appetising fillings also win consolation prizes. Both are good luncheon dishes.

All spoon measurements in our recipes refer to level spoons.

MOCHA TARTS

One and a half cups plain, sweet biscuit crumbs, ½ cup brown sugar, 1 teaspoon nutmeg, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 4 tablespoons melted butter or substitute.

Mocha Filling: One and a half cups milk, 3 teaspoons cocoa, 3 dessertspoons cornflour, 3 tablespoons sugar, vanilla, 1 teaspoon coffee essence, 1 teaspoon butter or substitute, whipped cream or mock cream, walnut pieces.

Mix biscuit crumbs with brown sugar, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Add melted shortening, mix well. Line patty paper-cases (standing in pattytins) with crumb mixture, chill until firm. Blend cornflour, cocoa, and sugar with a little of the milk. Heat balance of milk, stir in blended mixture, continue stirring until boiling, simmer 2 to 3 minutes. Add coffee essence, vanilla, and butter; mix well. Allow to cool. Fill into crumb shells, chill. Decorate with cream and walnuts.

First Prize of £5 to Mrs. H. Clay, 28 Emu St., Canterbury, N.S.W.



MOCHA TARTS (above) topped with cream and walnuts are tempting with tea or as a sweet. Prepared in paper cups, they can be eaten with a small spoon if desired. See main prizewinning recipe.

Kitchen hints

DEVILLED almonds or Brazil nuts have a tantalising flavor just right for cocktail parties or supper parties. Blanch and shell the nuts, slice or leave whole, and saute in butter or margarine with salt and dash of cayenne pepper.

★ ★ ★

FOR a one-person luncheon or a luxury breakfast try young chicken joints steamed, served on hot waffles and coated with white sauce lightly flavored with herbs and pinch grated lemon rind.

★ ★ ★

WHEN Christmas food fills the refrigerator remember that peas and beans keep well if prepared as for cooking and placed in screw-top jars. Salad greens can be crisped (after washing) in covered containers, with a small quantity of water in the bottom.

★ ★ ★

FOR an attractive, simple sweet, fill individual moulds with assorted jellied custards—chocolate, caramel, vanilla, strawberry, or any family favorite. Chill well, turn out on to bed of chopped jelly, decorate with chopped crystallised fruit.

★ ★ ★

DID you know that cosmetic tweezers are just the ideal gadget for removing pinfeathers from the turkey or fowl?

★ ★ ★

ANOTHER point not to be forgotten—all foods should be kept covered with new type plastic or lids. Special attention must be paid to strong-smelling foods. Cover securely, and keep at the bottom of refrigerator or ice-chest.

SAVORY SHORTCAKE

Six ounces self-raising flour, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon mixed herbs, 2oz. butter or substitute, ¼ teaspoon grated onion, 4 or 5 tablespoons milk, 1 dessertspoon melted shortening.

Sift flour with salt, rub in shortening. Add onion and herbs. Mix to scone dough with milk. Knead on floured board. Press half into greased 6in. sandwich-tin, brush with melted shortening, cover with second portion. Bake in hot oven 20 minutes. Slit through centre, fill with savory filling, serve hot. Here are two suggested fillings:

Creamed Lamb and Onion: 1oz. shortening, 3 dessertspoons flour, ½ pint milk, ½ cup finely chopped onion, 5oz. or 6oz. diced cooked lamb (or beef), ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce, salt, pepper, 1 dessertspoon chopped parsley.

Make a white sauce with shortening, flour, and milk. Add onion, meat, sauce, parsley, and seasonings. Reheat.

Veal and Celery: Three-quarter pound veal steak, 1 sliced onion, 1 cup diced celery, ½ teaspoon salt, ¼lb. peeled mushrooms (may be omitted), 1 tablespoon flour blended with ¼ cup milk.

Cook diced veal, onion, celery, and salt in covered saucepan with sufficient water to cover (about 1 cup) ¾ hour. Add chopped mushrooms, simmer 10 minutes. Add blended flour, stir over low heat until boiling. Cook 2 to 3 minutes, correct seasoning.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. M. Ryan, 46 Station St., Norlane, Vic.

UTILITY MIXTURE

Basic Mixture: Eight ounces good shortening, 1 cup sugar, 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind, 2 eggs, 3 cups self-raising flour, pinch salt.

Cream shortening with sugar and lemon rind. Add eggs, mix well. Fold in sifted flour and salt, making firm scone dough. Use to make apple charlotte, date fold-ups, and raspberry buns.

Apple Charlotte: Roll half prepared mixture to ⅛in. thickness. Use half to line 7in. tart-plate. Fill with 2 large apples, lightly stewed, sprinkle with cinnamon. Cover with balance, bake in hot oven 10 minutes, reduce heat, cook 15 minutes longer.

Date Fold-ups: Roll one-quarter of mixture thinly. Cut into 2in. squares. Place 1 or 2 dates on each, glaze edges, fold diagonally. Slit top of each, glaze, sprinkle with sugar. Bake in hot oven 10 to 12 minutes. (Makes about 1 dozen.)

Raspberry Buns. Roll remaining mixture into balls, slightly smaller than golf ball. Place on greased trays, make a hollow in centre of each, fill with raspberry jam. Bake in hot oven 10 to 12 minutes. (Makes about 1 dozen.)

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. E. Smart, Barkly St., Wahgunyah, Vic.

CRISP FISH CAKES

One 16oz. tin fish cutlets (or salmon), 1½ cups mashed potatoes, 1 egg, 1 small onion, 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce, pinch salt and cayenne pepper, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, seasoned flour, egg-glazing, crushed cornflakes, lemon wedges, tartare sauce.

Combine hot potato, onion, and parsley. Add beaten egg and Worcestershire sauce. Drain and flake fish, add to potato mixture. Season to taste, leave until cold. Shape into cakes, keeping fingers coated with flour. Dip in egg-glazing, toss in crushed cornflakes. Bake on greased tray in moderate oven 15 to 20 minutes. Garnish with lemon, serve with tartare sauce.

Consolation Prize of £1 to H. R. Thornton, 11 Renwick St., Drummoyne, N.S.W.



FISH CAKES, baked until golden, and served with tartare sauce, are fine fare for luncheon or dinner. See recipe on this page.

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COLORFUL WRAPPING and a brightly trimmed box enhance the appearance of home-made sweets. Transparent wrapping paper may be used, but some sweets look more attractive unwrapped. Varieties illustrated above include marshmallows, French jellies, caramels, fudge, fondant creams, prune and date creams. See the recipes on this page.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SWEETS

Fresh home-made sweets, attractively wrapped and packed, make distinctive Christmas gifts, which all the family will enjoy.

TINSEL, pretty wrapping, and colored ribbons add a professional finish to a box of home-made sweets.

Organise a family working bee to help cover the boxes and make and pack the sweets. But don't give your assistants too much time for tasting until the last box is filled.

Special equipment is not necessary for good results, but a sweet-making thermometer is helpful and makes the work easier.

Spoon measurements in all our recipes are level.

RAINBOW MARSHMALLOWS

Two ounces gelatine, 2lb. sugar, 1½ cups boiling water, 1 cup cold water, 2 teaspoons vanilla, 1 dessertspoon lemon juice, red or green coloring.

Soak gelatine in cold water. Add sugar to boiling water, bring back to boiling point. Stir in soaked gelatine, boil steadily 20 minutes. Allow to cool to lukewarm, flavor with vanilla and lemon juice. Beat until very thick and white. Pour one-third into another basin, add coloring. Pour half into greased tin, set quickly on ice. Pour in uncolored two-thirds of mixture, when firm add balance of red mixture. (It may be necessary to stand bowl in warm water for a few minutes if the small quantity has set.) When quite set turn out on to greaseproof paper covered with sifted icing sugar. Cut into squares, toss in icing sugar.

N.B.: Plain marshmallows are made from the same recipe, omitting the coloring.

FRENCH JELLIES

Two ounces gelatine, 2lb. sugar, 1½ pints cold water, lemon juice or any fruit essence to flavor, any desired coloring.

Soften gelatine in ½ pint of the water, add balance of water and sugar. Bring to the boil, cook steadily 20 minutes. Allow to become cold, color and flavor as desired. Pour into square tins rinsed with cold water. When set turn out on to greased paper dusted with castor sugar. Cut into blocks, dust with castor sugar.

CREAMY CARAMELS

One tin sweetened condensed milk, 8oz. brown sugar, ¼lb. butter, 2 tablespoons golden syrup.

Place all ingredients into saucepan, stir over low heat until dark brown in color and until mixture leaves the sides of saucepan. Pour into greased tin. When cool, mark into squares, cut when cold.

FUDGE

Two cups brown sugar, 4 tablespoons milk, 4oz. butter, 1 tablespoon glucose, ½ cup chopped walnuts.

Place all ingredients (except walnuts) in saucepan and stir gently over medium heat until mixture boils. Boil to 240deg. F. or until a teaspoonful of the syrup dropped into cold water can be moulded into a soft ball with the fingers. When cool beat until thickened, fold in walnuts, and beat until stiff. Turn into greased tin. When almost set, mark into squares and cut with a sharp knife.

UNCOOKED FONDANT

One pound pure icing sugar, 1 egg-white, 2oz. liquid glucose, ½ teaspoon vanilla, coloring.

Sift icing sugar, make a well in centre. Drop in egg-white (broken up with a fork, but not beaten), melted glucose, and flavoring. Work icing sugar in from the sides until all ingredients are mixed to a stiff mass. Turn on to board dusted with icing sugar. Knead until mixture has absorbed sufficient icing sugar to hold its shape. Add dabs of coloring and continue kneading until evenly colored.

COOKED FONDANT

One pound sugar, ½ pint water, 1 dessertspoon glucose, ½ teaspoon vanilla, squeeze lemon juice or any flavoring and coloring desired.

Place sugar, water, and glucose into a saucepan over low heat. Stir only occasionally. When mixture boils do not stir again, place lid on saucepan and leave on for 2 minutes. Remove lid. Boil to 240deg. F. or until a teaspoonful of the syrup dropped into cold water may be moulded into a soft ball with the fingers. Pour into a basin, allow to cool. Beat until thick, then knead well with the hands, color and flavor as desired, kneading until evenly colored.

FONDANT CREAMS

Fruit Rolls: Mix 1 tablespoon chopped dates with 1 chopped fig, 1 tablespoon chopped raisins, 5 or 6 chopped cherries. Roll pieces of fondant (colored and flavored) into thin strips. Place fruit mixture on one half, roll up and shape into a 1in. roll. Cut into ½in. slices.

Walnut Creams: Color and flavor fondant as desired. Shape pieces into small rounds, press a walnut half on each side.

Almond Creams: Flavor fondant with almond essence, make as for walnut creams, using whole blanched almonds.

Prune Creams: Remove stones from large, soft prunes. Fill with a small piece of colored and flavored fondant.

Date Creams: Make as for prune creams.

GINGER CREAMS

Two cups sugar, ½ cup milk, 1 teaspoon glucose, ½ cup chopped crystallised ginger or ginger in syrup, few drops yellow coloring.

Place sugar, milk, and glucose into saucepan. Stir occasionally until sugar dissolves, but do not stir after syrup has boiled. Boil to 236deg. F. or until a teaspoonful of the syrup dropped into cold water may be moulded with the fingers into a soft ball. Remove from heat, pour into a basin. Allow to stand until slightly cooled. Beat until beginning to thicken, fold in ginger and yellow coloring. When very thick press into greased tin. When quite cold and set cut into squares.

Note: Cherry creams may be made in the same way, using chopped glace or maraschino cherries instead of ginger, and colored pink.

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ROYAL RECIPES

These recipes, favorites of Royal Families since the reign of Queen Victoria, are quoted from a new book, "Royal Chef," by Gabriel Tschumi, who catered for Royalty at Buckingham Palace for more than 50 years.

SWISS-BORN Gabriel Tschumi joined the Palace staff as a kitchen apprentice in the spring of 1899, when Queen Victoria was still on the throne, and rose from this humble post to the position of Royal Chef.

After the death of Queen Victoria he served her son King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, and finally George V and Queen Mary.

In his fascinating book, published by William Kimber & Co. Ltd., London, Tschumi tells of fabulous banquets in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, of Epsom and Ascot luncheons at which 14 courses were served, and of Royal Family dinners in the years before World War I, when the German and Russian Emperors were still reigning in Europe.

Gabriel Tschumi spent the final years of Royal household service at Marlborough House with Queen Mary.

"Queen Mary, though first and foremost a queen in every sense, was a careful and wise household manager," he writes.

"She selected all menus herself. Sometimes there would be eight or ten guests at supper.

"They were always light, simple suppers, consisting of a salad and dessert, or perhaps savories and bridge rolls as Queen Mary liked them prepared—with the entire centre scooped out and filled with minced chicken in mayonnaise. Sometimes guests would include the Duchess of Kent, the Princess Royal, or the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

"The last interview with Queen Mary was a sad one . . . we chatted in French for a few moments, and to mark my retirement she presented me with a salver inscribed with the words, 'To M. G. Tschumi, from Queen Mary, October, 1952.'

"'Adieu, Tschumi,' she said."

BALMORAL SHORTBREAD

[Queen Victoria had a little of this almost every day.]

Three-quarter pound flour, ¼lb. butter, ¼lb. sugar.

Rub in butter and sugar on a board, then work in flour lightly with fingertips. Roll out about an eighth of an inch thick, cut into circles, prick with a fork, and bake on a greased tray in a moderate oven for about 15 minutes.

These were always pricked in the same way at Buckingham Palace, in a domino pattern with three rows of three dots.

BAVORAIS AU CHOCOLAT

[From Queen Victoria's garden party menu of July 11, 1900.]

Put in a stewpan ¼lb. sugar and 1 quart milk, gradually stirring in 8 egg-yolks and ¼lb. grated cooking chocolate. Allow to thicken as with a custard, stirring constantly, but do not allow it to boil. When cold, stir in 1 pint whipped cream and 6 sheets melted gelatine (5 or 6 dessertspoons gelatine dissolved in 6 tablespoons boiling water). Pour into moulds and put in ice-box to freeze. Serve in individual glass dishes with petits fours.

KING EDWARD VII's YORKSHIRE PUDDING

Take ¼lb. flour and 5 whole eggs and beat together in a basin for about 10 minutes until thoroughly blended. Then add 1 pint milk, strain the mixture through a sieve, and cook in very hot dripping in a frying-pan.

CHICKEN MOUSSE

[A favorite with Queen Mary.]

Take several fillets of chicken, remove all sinews, and pound with the whipped-up white of 1 egg and a tablespoonful of very thick bechamel or chicken sauce. Then pass through a very fine hair sieve and stir in a gill of whipped cream until it reaches a firm consistency. This can be tested by dropping small pieces into boiling water. When sufficiently firm to hold its shape, put the mixture into a buttered copper mousse mould and poach in a covered stewpan on a hotplate for about a quarter of an hour. It should not be allowed to boil. Turn out on a silver dish and serve with plain, white chicken gravy.

POMMES DE TERRE DANOISE

[Enjoyed by King George V when convalescing at Bognor.]

Bake a very large potato in the oven after scrubbing and removing the eyes, and when cooked slice off the top and scoop out the inside. Pass it through a sieve, mix with a little hot milk, cream, butter, and salt into a puree, and return. Serve the potato very hot, dotted with butter.

Oeuf Suzette: Follow the procedure for Pommes de Terre Danoise, but line the inside of the potato with very thin slices of ham in bechamel sauce, replace half the puree, and top with one or two poached eggs surrounded by bechamel sauce and sprinkled with grated cheese. Heat in oven until very hot, and brown the cheese under a griller.

Oeuf Cardinal: This is a variation of Oeuf Suzette, where chopped, cooked lobster is used instead of slices of ham, and the eggs are surrounded with a thick lobster sauce and sprinkled with grated cheese.

QUEEN MARY DESSERTS

Coupes Montreuil: Make a vanilla cream from ¼lb. of sugar boiled with 1 quart of milk, into which is stirred gradually the beaten yolks of 8 eggs. Allow to thicken, but not to boil. When cold, stir in ½ pint fresh cream; freeze.

Slice up 4 raw peaches and arrange in dessert glasses, allowing half a peach per person. Squeeze a little lemon juice over each so the fruit will not turn brown, sprinkle with castor sugar. Top with vanilla cream and serve plain. Will serve eight.

Coupes Malmaison: Use the same vanilla cream recipe. Peel and pip some large white grapes, allowing for 6 or 8 per person, and arrange in dessert glasses. Pour over a little champagne and sprinkle with small pieces of ice. Top with vanilla cream. Serve with biscuits or wafers.

SAUMON A LA MARLBOROUGH HOUSE

[The Duke of Windsor's favorite luncheon dish.]

Take a firm, fresh salmon, pink and well colored, and cut into very thin slices or cutlets. Grill for a few minutes each side under a hot griller and serve plain and ungarnished with mashed potatoes and croquettes. Snapper may be used instead of salmon.

QUINCHE DE LORRAIN

[The Duchess of Gloucester's savory.]

One tumbler milk (½ pint), ½ tumbler cream, 6 egg-yolks, 1 whole egg, 4 tablespoonfuls parmesan cheese, cayenne pepper.

Mix milk, cream, and eggs well in a basin, strain into saucepan and add parmesan. Slowly heat, stirring constantly until it thickens like a custard, but do not allow to boil. When thick, put into souffle cases, leave a few minutes in oven, then brown quickly under a griller.

QUEEN MARY'S BIRTHDAY CAKE

[This is the recipe M. Tschumi used for each of Queen Mary's birthday cakes during the five years he was at Marlborough House. It was one of her favorite cake mixtures.]

Eight egg-yolks, 2 whites, ¼lb. sugar, 3oz. flour, 2oz. melted butter. Chocolat ganache filling: One pint cream, 6oz. sugar, 1lb. grated or melted cooking chocolate.

Whip the eggs and sugar in a bowl over hot water until set. Then fold in flour and melted butter. Pour mixture into two round cake-tins, buttered and floured. Cook in a moderate oven about 30 minutes.

Method for the ganache filling: Boil cream, sugar, and cooking chocolate in a heavy saucepan, then leave for 1 hour to cool. Cut each of the cakes in half, and spread with the ganache so that you have a four-layer sandwich. Coat the cake with the rest of the chocolat ganache, which by this stage has almost set. Serve.

GATEAU EN SURPRISE

[The Princess Royal's favorite dessert. It is made from the same Genoise cake mixture as given above.]

Pour into a deep cake-tin, buttered and floured, cook in moderate oven.

Leave cake on a wire tray to cool, then slice off the top, scoop out the inside and fill with vanilla or chocolate ice-cream. Replace top, pour over very hot chocolate sauce, and serve cut in slices.

Sauce: Mix 4oz. each of grated chocolate and cocoa, 1lb. sugar, and 1 pint water together in saucepan, bring to boil.

KING GEORGE V's IRISH STEW

Two pounds neck of mutton, 2lb. potatoes, 1 lb. onions, 1½ pints water.

Cut mutton into rather thick cutlets and blanch. Put in stewpan in layers, one of onion, cut very thin, one of potatoes, then one layer of mutton, seasoning with salt and pepper. Add water and cook gently for 1½ hours. Take meat out, pass potatoes and onions through a coarse sieve, making a puree of medium thickness. Arrange mutton in a deep dish with some plain, boiled potatoes, olive-shaped, and boiled button onions. Pour puree over and serve very hot. Garnish with chopped parsley and freshly ground black pepper.

CREPE AU NATUREL

[A type of pancake very popular with King George V.]

Half pound flour, 2oz. sugar, pinch salt, 5 eggs, 3 tablespoonfuls cream, 1 pint milk, 1oz. melted butter, a little brandy.

Beat together flour, sugar, salt, eggs, and cream for about 10 minutes until thoroughly blended. Add milk, brandy, and melted butter, stir in well, strain and allow to stand from 2 to 3 hours. Fry in clarified butter in an omelette-pan, and when cooked sprinkle with castor sugar, roll, and serve very hot with quarters of lemon.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE MUTTON PIES

[This recipe is the one M. Tschumi learnt to make in Queen Victoria's day, and it is still made this way for the young Queen Elizabeth II. Though mutton is recommended, it could also be made with beef, chicken, or even rabbit.]

Make a number of tartlet cases about the size of mince pies from short paste, and from puff paste cut out two circles, one smaller than the other, for the tops of the tartlets. Cut a hole about the size of threepence in the smaller of the circles, and cook in the oven with the cases.

Cut slices from a cooked leg of mutton into small squares without fat or sinew, cook two finely chopped shallots in butter and mix with the meat in a pan with enough good stock to cover it. It should then be cooked slowly for about an hour until the meat is extremely tender. Remove the meat, cover with a good, rich brown sauce seasoned with salt, pepper, and a dash of Worcestershire sauce, and fill the cases with this mixture. Put a little meat jelly on the top, cover with the puff-paste circles, one on top of the other, and fill the small hole with a little beef jelly. Serve cold.

JAMBON FROID A LA GELEE

[Made for Queen Mary with tinned ham from Australia.]

Slice ham very thinly, leaving all the fat and trim. Set in chicken jelly made from stock, garnish with parsley. Serve with plain, green salad without dressing.



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Cream the shortening with honey. Add egg and beat mixture well. Crush Corn Flakes finely. Mix with sifted flour, salt and baking powder. Add to creamed mixture alternately with the milk, stirring lightly and mixing evenly. Two-thirds fill greased muffin or deep patty pans with mixture. Bake in moderately hot oven for 20 to 25 minutes.

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F2929.—Small girl's petticoat slip and matching panties. Sizes: 18in., 20in., 23in., and 27in. lengths for 2, 4, 6, and 8 years. Requires 7-8yd. 36in. material, 3-8yd. 36in. lace, 5¼yds. ¼in. lace edging, 2½yds. beading, plus 2¼yds. ¼in. satin ribbon. Price, 2/6.

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F2933

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567

No. 567.—SUNSUIT

A trousers-bib sunsuit, suitable for a small girl or boy, is obtainable cut out ready to make and clearly traced to embroider. The suit is made in pin-spot printed summer breese and the bib in plain headcloth. The color choice includes a red, blue, and green spot printed on a white ground; the bib is white. Sizes: Length 18in. for 2 years, 11/9; postage and registration 1/- extra. 19in. for 3 years, 12/11; postage and registration 1/- extra. 20in. for 4 years, 13/6; postage and registration 1/3 extra.

No. 568.—SMALL GIRL'S DRESS AND MATCHING PANTIES

The pretty frill-trimmed dress and matching panties are obtainable cut out ready to make with an easy-to-follow instruction chart. The material is a pin-spot printed summer breese; the color a red, blue, and green spot printed on a white ground. Sizes: Length 18in. for 2 years, 19/9; postage and registration 1/3 extra. 19in. for 3 years, 21/-; postage and registration 1/3 extra. 20in. for 4 years, 23/3; postage and registration 1/6 extra. 23in. for 5-6 years, 28/6; postage and registration 1/6 extra.

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Two easy-to-make sunbonnets are obtainable clearly traced ready to embroider. Both designs open out flat for laundering. Design "A" has a floral motif and "B" a scalloped edge. The material is headcloth, obtainable in white, blue, lemon, pale pink, and green. Price, 4/6 each, or set of two, 8/9. Postage and registration 10d. extra.

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568

569

570









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DRESS SENSE by Betty Keep

A dual-purpose summer dress designed to be worn in or out of doors is a popular and practical fashion for the young housewife. The fashion is illustrated on the page.

HERE is the letter in which the writer asked for a dress of this type.

"I AM quite sure I am only one among thousands of young housewives who have very little spending money, yet I like to look attractively dressed. Why not publish a design for a frock suitable to wear at home, on the beach, and doing the daily shopping? Don't make it too difficult. The average home dressmaker is not an expert."

This week's Dress Sense Pattern is given in answer to your letter. The dress is easy to launder and cool and attractive to wear. It can be worn in and out of doors and as a regular summer dress. The design, too, is right in current fashion, the princess slip decolletage showing the influence of Dior's recent Paris collections. This new bodice-top is already creeping into summer fashion. A paper pattern for the design is obtainable in sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. The pattern includes a clearly set out step-by-step instruction chart which can be followed easily by the average home dressmaker. The caption under sketch gives further details and tells you how to order.



D.S. 64.—One-piece dress in sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 4yds. 36in. material and ½yd. 36in. contrast. Price, 3/6. Patterns obtainable from Mrs. Betty Keep, Dress Sense, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney.

"WOULD you help me with a suggestion for a frock to wear to my son's wedding in January? It is a formal affair at 7.15 p.m., with the reception at a city hotel. I want to look suitably dressed for my 54 years."

As the mother of the bridegroom I certainly think you should wear something very pretty. Why not combine a simple, long-sleeved lace top with a matching chiffon skirt linked by a narrow satin belt? If you like this idea, have the bodice-top made with set-in below-elbow sleeves and finished with a long narrow V-neckline played up by a scalloped lace outline. Have the skirt just floor-length, with soft, all-round fullness. For the color I suggest dove-grey.

"MY problem is a year-round wrap, which is needed in this climate, as we have little or no really hot weather where I live. I want something between a shortie and an overcoat, but not a coat, in summer material."

New in fashion is the little overcoat-jacket reaching to finger-tip length. In my opinion this would be the perfect year-round "wrap." Have the design straight-cut with a collarless cardigan-type neckline and front fastening. If you have it made in natural-colored wool it will be perfect over light or dark clothes.

"MY bridesmaids are to wear pink organdie and I would like some advice about suitable designs, also suggestions for the flowers which the girls are to carry, and the correct outfit for a page-boy."

Choose the softest shade of petal-pink for your organdie bridesmaids' dresses, and a deeper shade of pink for wide, tucked waist-cummerbunds, the latter to be in taffeta. Have the bodice-tops finished with tiny Peter Pan collar and huge, puffed-up, short-in-length sleeves. Have all-round unpressed box-pleats for the skirts, and have the girls carry bouquets of red roses. The page-boy would be correctly dressed in black velvet trousers, which can be short or long, and a white silk shirt finished with a lace jabot and cuffs.

"AS a casual outfit for my summer holidays, I am planning to buy a skirt and some sort of separate top. If this is correct I would like your opinion on styles and colors.

The fashion for a separate "top" and skirt is an excellent one for resort or casual wear. Any of the following colors combined with black would look new and chic: soft brown, sea-colored turquoise-blue, honey, orange-red. The "top" could be a camisole-type sun-bodice, a shirt made with bat-wing sleeves and plunging neckline, or it could be a middy over-blouse with plenty of width. Most casual skirts are straight in front with a group of pleats (stitched low) at the back.

As I read the stars

By EVE HILLIARD

ARIES (March 21-April 20): A reward for enterprise and hard work on December 1; excellent also for students taking examinations. Temporary changes in your environment, December 7.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20): Any undertaking begun with great enthusiasm may meet with obstacles on the morning of December 3, but these can be overcome, with victory assured, December 5.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21): You must be prepared to work indirectly through other people, December 2, using tact. December 4 brings gain to any partnership.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): If you've been a trifle below par lately, December 1 is likely to bring improvement. A new deal starts with happy hours on December 6, and you can look forward to a fresh start.

LEO (July 23-August 22): The weekend holds promise of enjoyable social events, possibly a visit from Dame Fortune, December 5, and a romantic interlude, December 6. A new interest or friendship is likely.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Advertise your needs, inquire among associates on the afternoon of December 3. Good news may gladden your heart, December 4.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Have you explored the possibilities of your own neighborhood? December 3 may show treasure close by. Keep up the interest, December 5, and you may be richly rewarded.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Should December 2 be a challenge to your ingenuity, you might be agreeably surprised at the saving or financial gain of December 7.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 20): A long-cherished wish may be gratified, December 2, or some personal matter may reach a satisfactory climax. December 7 proves expensive.

CAPRICORN (December 21-January 19): Many will find the morning of December 3 full of frustrations, but steady effort will see you making progress, December 5.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 19): Don't push plans or ask favors, particularly of friends, December 2. December 4 favors prestige, romance, but tread warily, December 7.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Circumstances over which you have no control may combine to advance your interests, December 1 or 7.

[The Australian Women's Weekly presents this astrological diary as a feature of interest only, without accepting any responsibility whatever for the statements contained in it.]



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Continuing . . . Virtue Is Its Own Reward

from page 3

Daniel Fraunm, and I'm Gus Monciwelcz. Let us in."

She was Mrs. Mona Reynolds herself. She took us into the library of her house and gave us a couple of cigarettes. That was some old house. Some solid citizen had built that baby back about 1880, I guess, when they went in for everything square.

All the furniture was old antiques, and there were all these family oil portraits all over the joint, all hanging crooked. I like that. I mean, they were probably priceless ancestral relics, but Mrs. Reynolds didn't get up a sweat about them—she just let them hang crooked.

In the library I tried to explain to her how a couple of hacks like Gus and myself doctor up plays. She didn't get any of it, and that tickled me, because usually I'm around some wise-mouth who understands too much. And so Mrs. Reynolds turned out to be a pretty refreshing experience for me.

"Well, I don't see what there is for *you* to do," she said. "I've already written the play."

That made Gus sour. "Look, lady," he said, "how many plays have you wrote to date?"

"This is the first."

"How much money you got from it so far?"

"Five hundred dollars," she said. "For the option."

Gus snapped his fingers. "Then you're still nothing in my estimation but a gross amateur," he said.

Mrs. Reynolds looked kind of cut up by that remark, so I asked her what she wanted to write a play for in the beginning. And you know what she said? That she needed the money and thought it was a good way to get it.

Well, I thought Gus would turn green, because really that was the mark of the rankest kind of amateur. I mean, there's always some poor, miserable old guy out in Iowa, or someplace, that knows exactly zero who's trying to write to make a buck. It wouldn't be so bad if they did it for kicks. But for money!

Well, Mrs. Reynolds went ahead then and told us the story of her play. Oh, what a dog! It wouldn't film. Nobody would've believed it, it was so commonplace.

This Mrs. Reynolds was thirty-two, and when she had been just twenty she had married the late Mr. Reynolds, a man some fifteen years older than herself. So what did he do but die on her, leaving the farm and the house and small insurance.

The income from the farm was hardly nothing, and she had two boys: Ollie, aged eleven, and a younger one, nine. They were real boys all right. I saw plenty of them later on.

Anyway, that night we all went to the play together, the three of us. After dinner Gus and I stopped by to pick up Mrs. Reynolds. She came down the stairs, and she'd fixed herself all up.

She had on some linen dress and pearls. She looked a little bit like that English actress Vivien what's-her-name, and something like Jean Harlow, and a bit like Hepburn, too, when she was young. And from that minute right on through everything that happened later, Mrs. Reynolds had me hooked. I mean that.

It was raining a light summer rain that night, and at the theatre there must've been nearly six people in the audience. Mrs. Reynolds explained the worst thing in the world possible for summer theatre is summer rain.

About nine o'clock the play commenced. It was supposed to be snowing on stage, and the actors had on big coats, and they just dripped sweat.

The first act crawled along. During intermission Gus cursed me for wanting to stay to see the second act. I had my hands full all right, but I got him back in. The second act moved. It was all right. But the third act was horrible again as the first. So we went back to Mrs. Reynolds' house after, and she gave us some coffee.

"Lady, I'm sorry for you," Gus said to her. "I advise you to stick to your farm or motherhood and give up your ridiculous aspiration. Ain't there somebody in this world that'd marry you and get you off the financial hook?"

Well, that didn't make Mrs. Reynolds feel any better, I could tell, so I asked her where she got the idea originally. It came out of some old diary her grandmother's cousin, or somebody like that, wrote. Immediately the trouble with the thing was obvious to me. It was too real.

She'd already said she was going to put us up for the night in her spare bedrooms. So Gus went up, and I got her to give me the diary; and I sat there in the library and read it.

The poor joker that had written it—you could just see him married to an old frau that hated him, and them living together all winter long, and it was so cold they had to sleep in the kitchen.

I felt sorry for the guy, all right, but the diary didn't have real plot, and you could hardly expect the public to pay good money to see some miserable



"You and your bargain sales!"

human beings without plot or much suspense, when they could just as easily stay in their own home and be miserable themselves.

About eleven the next morning, when Gus woke up, I went in his room and told him the ideas I'd got on what to do with the thing. He was sitting up in bed, and his chest and arms were all covered with some red marks and blisters, and he kept scratching at himself.

He scoffed at me. "You sound like 'The Scarlet Letter,' by Eugene O'Neill," he said.

"But it's an angle, Gus."

He kept scratching. "Look at me," he said. "What do you think's the matter with my skin?"

I heard Mrs. Reynolds out in the hall, and I asked her to step in, and she said Gus had the poison ivy. She explained all about it. It sounded logical to me, but when Gus heard he'd been given the business by some vine with three leaves, wild horses couldn't keep him from going back to New York.

Well, somebody had to iron out details with Vincent concerning money if we were going to work on the play, so Gus took the diary and left with it under his arm. So then Mrs. Mona Reynolds and I were alone.

So that day after Gus left us, Mona and I, we were together all day, and practically all alone, except for her two maniacal kids, and she showed me around the farm, and we began to get pretty chummy.

Gradually it came to me that she was hanging on my every word. She was looking at me, expressing with her eyes the same emotions that I was feeling in my own heart.

Well, I was just stunned by that. I couldn't keep from asking myself how such an elegant creature could really go for a physical and mental runt like myself.

Well, the basis of Mrs. Reynolds' strange passion was—she thought I was a good guy. She was broke, and she'd written her play, and she must've known deep down in her own heart what an animal the thing was.

But, because I seemed interested in the play, which meant I was really interested in doing her a good turn—the play being so vile—that proved to her that I was of sterling worth, and she fell for me.

I didn't have much of a chance to do anything about that until after dinner. When she finally got the little monsters salted away in their trundle beds it was around ten. Then she came out to the verandah, where I was sitting with my portable radio.

It was a nice night, cool, the moon up, and you could smell the hay that had been cut there across the road. I was listening to some dance music originating from Chicago. And she'd put on a dress, one of those kind that drifts all over the place. The kind you can see right through them, except they wear a slip underneath.

Well, she sat down and started fiddling with her handkerchief, which was made out of the same material as the dress.

"Nice night," I said.

"Oh, yes. Lovely," she said, keeping up the business with the handkerchief. "Do you want a drink, Daniel?"

"No. I'm still pretty full from dinner," I said.

Well, she kept on fiddling with that handkerchief, and I could tell she was embarrassed and nervous and so on. And I'd already made up my mind I was going to try just one time to kiss her. I wasn't going to wrestle her around for a couple of hours. I had too much respect. So I put my arms around her and gave her a kiss.

She put her hands on my arms and squeezed me. We sat like that for I don't know how long, and then she pulled away and kind of looked at me. And we were both breathing hard from the exertion and effort.

She kept on looking at me with those solemn eyes, and I caught hold of her again and gave her another kiss. Then she began to cling to me like some absolutely sodden garment—and kiss? She made all the hair I had left stand straight up on the back of my neck.

To this day, I don't know how long we were there on that piece of porch furniture. The next thing I remember was when I stood up and picked her up and held her like that in my arms. Me, who couldn't lift a book of matches without tearing a ligament.

She buried her face in my neck. Then she took a deep breath, and whispered, "Oh, Daniel . . ."

That woman. If I'd had muscles they would've bulged at the sound of her voice. So I carried her upstairs and set her gently down on the hall floor there in front of the door to her room and kissed her on the forehead, and told her good night, and the next day after that we were in love.

I don't know how to say it exactly; it's hard to say, but I was willing to give up my past life in Hollywood and live in the country, or whatever she wanted. I mean I was in love.

Gus showed at about noon the next day, when Mona and I were lunching on the terrace there and holding hands. Gus came out, and at first he didn't say anything; he just started pacing back and forth, back and forth. So I knew right away whatever it was, it involved money.

Well, during the preceding twenty-four hours Vincent Freedman had been struck with an idea. From the second act of Mona's tragic play, Gus and I were going to write a book for a musical, but a serious musical like "The King And I," or "Kiss Me, Kate." Everything was set except for the male lead. For that Vincent had to have somebody Big.

It was the moment as far as my personal happiness was ever concerned, and then something so corny happened to ruin it all that I could've dropped dead if I'd had the time. For three or four days Mona was mad about me, and Gus and I were doing one of the most terrific jobs on the book we'd ever done on anything. Even Gus commented on it.

Then on the afternoon of the fourth day old Dad arrived in his English sports car. And Mona tiptoed into the study and said Franklin Still was inquiring for me. She didn't say "your dad." And I realised the old mongrel had had one look at her and decided to tell her nothing whatsoever about his little thirty-eight-year-old tot.

She and I went into the library, and there he was, ruddy and bronzed, his mouth full of those gleaming, phony teeth. From sheer force of habit, I played it the way he wanted. "Glad to see you, F.S.," I said. "This is Mrs. Mona Reynolds, the playwright."

Dad used some con expression like he was charmed or something. Mona replied it was an honor.

"And when do you leave for Halifax, F.S.?" I said.

"Halifax," he said. "Oh, my plans have been changed. Vincent Freedman wants me to return to Broadway."

"In our musical?" Mona said.

"Well, I did come up to take a look at the book," Dad said, "to see if it's right for me."

They went off arm in arm, and they must've evidently stayed in that position for about three weeks, because during that time I didn't see anyone but Gus.

Oh, I knew what was happening. Dad collected girls the way some people do dogs. No matter where he was, day or night, he always had some girl around him like she was on a chain. And did the girls love it!

One time, there in Hollywood, a dame showed up on roller skates from Des Moines. Maybe you remember about it, reading about it in the papers? Well, she was the president or chairman of the board or something of the Des Moines Franklin Still Fan Club, and she'd rollerskated all the way out to see him in the flesh.

She got to shake hands with Dad, and I wish you could've seen the look on her face when she busted out crying. She said she was happy enough to die. Well, that's the way my dad affects them.

And the tragic thing was that

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ALL characters in the serials and short stories which appear in The Australian Women's Weekly are fictitious, and have no reference to any living persons.

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Continuing

Virtue Is Its Own Reward

from page 50

my hands were tied practically behind my back because I was so busy. Vincent was operating with a limited budget of about a quarter of a million dollars, and they rehearsed the book as fast as we could write it. The chorus was working out in New York, and Dad's voice teacher flew in from the Coast. Then we opened for a week in the country at that barn.

It was the hit of the summer country season. Dad drew customers like flies. Or so they told me. I never saw it myself, because at the end of our gruesome ordeal I collapsed in my bed with exhaustion and nervous disorders.

I had everything — loss of weight, cigarette-smoker's stomach, and all. So the show ran a week in that barn, and late one night Gus came into my room and told me Vincent was taking it the next day to New York for two weeks' rehearsals, and then it was going to open at the Ziegfeld.

I asked him was Mona going, and he said yes and tried to get me to drink some hot milk; but I put on my bathrobe and brushed my teeth and went downstairs.

Mona was in the library alone there, poking at a small fire she had built for herself in the fireplace. When I saw her I felt very shy and said hello.

She looked around. "Oh, Daniel," she said.

"Yeah," I said. It was some conversation.

"Someone told me you were ill."

"Well, they're all saying I'll live now," I said.

"Really?" Mona said. "Oh, Daniel, that's a joke."

"Yeah. A pleasantry," I said. "Listen, why can't you and I get married? I make three thousand a week when I'm working."

"Oh, Daniel!" she said. All of a sudden she looked wretched, and I knew that until that second when I had brought it all back she had completely forgotten how only a few short weeks before she had been so hot on me.

And it hurt her, too, because she was not the type of person who could pull a dirty trick on somebody and feel very good about it after. "I can't," she said. "You certainly must have a low opinion of me, Daniel."

"Oh, on the contrary," I said.

"Sit down, dear," she said to me. So I sat down.

"Dear, I'm going to marry Franklin," she said. It wasn't exactly a surprise. "It's not that you haven't meant a great deal to me," she went on in that same vein. "You have. A great deal. But I can't marry you."

"Don't I make enough money?"

She went into her handkerchief-twisting bit. "Can't you understand?" she said. "I was married to an older man once. This time I want to marry someone closer to my own age. And you are older, dear."

She didn't mean I was older than she was—she thought I was older than my own dad. Well, I just sat there for a second coughing, because I had such a terrible hacking cough. And I thought.

She was such a refined person with breeding, and she felt so dismal about me loving her and so on. And I honestly wanted her to have whatever she wanted for herself. My brain was racing, I was trying so hard to think of how to keep her from ever finding out the real truth about my dad.

So I stood up and I put my hand on her shoulder; and what I was going to do was a pretty fine thing, of course, because I loved her, if you can understand that.

I felt like Ronald Colman in that film, when he said there at the end, before they chopped off his knob: "It's a far, far better thing what I'm going to do now than I have ever, ever done before, and so forth." Or words to that effect. When he was playing that character Sidney Cotton.

"Honey," I said to her, "you're doing the right thing, so you go straight ahead. I'm overcome, because you know how I feel about you." I stopped and cleared my throat, and then I went on, and she was crying.

"Honey," I said, "we've had to keep this a secret for business reasons. I don't want you to ever mention it to anyone, but you're right about me being older than F.S. The actual truth is that I'm his father."

And then I kissed her on her little white forehead and went up to my room and collapsed with a hundred-and-four-degree temperature.

The next day, everyone left but me and went into New York with the show, including Gus. I was too sick myself. Of course, before Gus left he got me a nurse and the finest possible doctor in the locality, a big, boisterous nut with a very loud mouth, who used to come into my sickroom like Santy Claus laughing, "Oh, ho, ho, ho!"

Well, I got rid of him. I paid him his bill, and he left me alone. . . .

You may not believe this, but there's a certain class of producer that just can't let their talent alone; they got to work it to death until it drops dead. Vincent Freedman belonged to that class.

Night and day he would call you upon the telephone regardless of the hour. There I am, a sick man in Connecticut and brokenhearted and despondent over Mona, although I knew I'd done the best for her, and what happens?

Vincent calls me and forces me to come down to New York immediately and do last-minute rewriting. And it was in my contract. I had to go or lose money.

That was the day before opening night. The show opened Wednesday night, and that was Tuesday. About ten-thirty that morning, Tuesday, I turned up at the Plaza there, where Gus had a room, and I went upstairs in the elevator.

Gus and the house physician were both waiting for me, and the bed was all turned back, so I put on my pyjamas and crawled in, with a pencil and a pad of paper.

The house physician gave me a complete physical examination and said I needed a long rest. When he left, Gus gave me the rest of his benzedrine, and we went to work.

Later, at five-thirty, the telephone began to ring. It was Vincent, and he was outraged and worried half sick to death. Dad hadn't come to rehearsals all that day—and no one had seen him in twenty-four hours.

Then a strange thing happened. I told Gus what Vincent had said—because I answered the phone, see—and Gus turned white. And I mean whiter than ordinary. "Do you think that old fool has picked this time to go off on a barge?" he choked out.

Gus grabbed the telephone and called the New York office. I mean the New York office of the picture company on the Coast that had Dad under contract.

"What're you sweating for?" I said. "So Dad's been swept from the face of the earth. All right, that's Vincent's problem."

"Vincent, my Aunt Fanette," Gus growled. "I got my hard-earned dough in this thing."

Well, that was a surprise to me, because Gus never, never invested his own money in any show he wrote part of. And nobody knew where Dad was.

And Gus got terribly excited and flung on his coat and hat and slammed out of the hotel room to evidently comb all the bars in the metropolitan area.

Then, at ten o'clock that night or so, the phone rang again, and it was a police officer downstairs who wanted to see me, to talk to me. At first I thought they'd found Dad's body, so I told him to come right up.

Well, he was one of the nicest, brightest-looking young fellows you could ever hope to meet. He came in the door, and right away he took off his hat and asked in a low voice were we alone, and was it okay to talk.

"I'm terribly sorry, sir," he said. "But the truth is we've arrested Franklin Still. We really didn't mean to. Honest."

It was just one of those usual, ordinary raids of a dame's apartment, where she was taking bets and peddling a little marijuana now and then.

The cops had been keeping their eye on her, and what bad luck they had to pick the only night when Dad was ever there to blow the lid off.

However, to get on with it. Dad told me all about it much later on. It wasn't anything like you might think. The dame was an old friend of his from silent pictures, and he hadn't seen her in years until he bumped into her there on Fifth Avenue.

She asked him up for a drink, and they got to laughing and talking about old memories, and before Dad knew it the time had slipped by.

Well, when the cop first told me, I didn't know the truth, and I thought the same thing anyone would think. And I knew that no matter what else, it would wreck Mona's chance for happy marriage.

So I sent a hired car that I'd hired myself down to 100 Centre Street, and the nice young police officer got Dad out a side door without any photographers seeing him, and so home to bed. Dad treated him pretty generously, too. He gave him his autograph.

Well, the show went on the next night as planned, free from rotten publicity; and Dad went over big, and it was all a terrifying success. I hadn't planned to see the first night, but another funny thing happened and so afterward I went. I went with Mona.

That afternoon about two-thirty, I was in bed with a sick headache from fatigue, having a cup of tea, when she busted into my room at the Plaza. She was beautiful, with her eyes flashing. She came straight to my bed and put her hand on my forehead.

"You're sick," she said, looking me right in the eyes. "Well, I'm going to take care of you. I've done a rotten thing to you. I'm going to stay with you now and see that you get well."

At first I didn't get it, because she wasn't a nurse or anything like that, so for a minute neither of us seemed to say anything, and she just stood there admiring me with her eyes. Then she asked, "Why did you lie to me?"

Instantly I knew she had found out something, but I didn't know what; so all I could say was that I had never told a lie in my life.

"You're not his father," she said. "He's your father."

Well, then I made a fool out of myself, I guess, because I tried to give her a piece of good advice, like Dale Carnegie or somebody, and I'm just not that type of person. I said, "Mona, what difference does it make how old a person is as long as he acts young?"

"That's true, dear," she said, "but your father has overdone it."

You see, somebody had told her about Dad's escapade. And she thought what any normal American woman would've, that Dad and the dame who got jugged were sweethearts. I was suffering from the same delusion myself, because I hadn't seen Dad for him to tell me the truth.

And when I realised I couldn't ever bring them together again, I kind of broke down and asked her to marry me, and she instantly accepted.

About five-thirty she left the hotel room, and I got right on the telephone and called that diamond shop, Cartier's. And I gave the ring to her that night during intermission.

So when I saw Gus I asked him did he tell Mona about Dad, because I knew he was the only person who was mad enough.

"Listen, don't go getting ideas in your head," Gus said. "Virtue is its own reward. Don't you know that by now? How many movies you wrote, anyway? So you were virtuous, so you got rewarded. So shut up."

Well, that's all. Except after we were an instantaneous smash hit on Broadway, Mona and I went back to the farm and got married. Shortly before he went back to the Coast, Gus took a run up to see us. And he looked terrible. He'd lost weight.

So when he left I walked out to the car with him, and for a minute I felt sad, because we had collaborated with each other so long, and Gus had really taught me everything I knew. "I kind of wish I was going, too," I broke out all of a sudden. "I'm sure going to miss Hollywood, Gus."

He gave me a kind of dirty look and spat on my gravel drive that leads from the road there up to the house. "Sure," he said in a very sarcastic tone. "Ars gratia artis." And he left.

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FOR THE CHILDREN

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BL34

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By Wilma Taal

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CITY FILM GUIDE

Films reviewed

CENTURY.—★ "Blueprint For Murder," mystery, starring Jean Peters, Joseph Cotten, Gary Merrill. Plus ★ "County Fair," cinecolor racing drama, starring Rory Calhoun, Jane Nigh.

CIVIC.—★★ "Rocky Mountain," Western, starring Errol Flynn, Patrice Wymore. Plus ★★ "Strangers on a Train," thriller, starring Farley Granger, Robert Walker. (Both re-releases.)

ESQUIRE.—★ "Luxury Girls," drama, starring Susan Stephen, Anna Maria Ferrere, Jacques Sernas, Steve Barclay. Plus featurettes.

LIBERTY.—★★★ "The Band Wagon," technicolor musical, starring Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse, Jack Buchanan. Plus featurettes.

LYRIC.—★★ "Latin Lovers," technicolor romantic comedy, starring Lana Turner, Ricardo Montalban, John Lund. Plus ★★ "Across the Wide Missouri," technicolor Western, starring Clark Gable. (Both re-releases.)

PLAZA.—★ "Powder River," technicolor Western, starring Rory Calhoun, Corinne Calvet. Plus "Undercover Woman," mystery, starring Stephanie Batchelor.

PRINCE EDWARD.—★★ "The Stooge," comedy, starring Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Marion Marshall. Plus featurettes.

REGENT.—★ "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," technicolor musical, starring Marilyn Monroe, Jane Russell, Tommy Noonan. Plus ★ "Southside 1-1000," thriller, starring Don DeFore, Andrea King.

STATE.—★★★ "From Here to Eternity," drama, starring Montgomery Clift, Burt Lancaster, Frank Sinatra, Deborah Kerr, Donna Reed. Plus featurettes.

ST. JAMES.—★★ "Give a Girl a Break," technicolor musical, starring Marge and Gower Champion, Debbie Reynolds. (See review this page.) Plus ★ "Remains To Be Seen," mystery-comedy, starring Van Johnson, June Allyson.

VARIETY.—★ "Jamaica Run," technicolor adventure drama, starring Ray Milland, Arlene Dahl, Wendell Corey. Plus "Oriental Evil."

VICTORY.—★★ "Sangaree," 3-D technicolor period adventure, starring Fernando Lamas, Arlene Dahl. (See review this page.) Plus "The Vanquished," technicolor Western, starring John Payne, Jan Sterling, Lyle Bettger.

Films not yet reviewed

CAPITOL.—"The Savage," technicolor Western, starring Charlton Heston, Susan Morrow. Plus ★ "Mississippi," musical, starring Bing Crosby, Joan Bennett, W. C. Fields. (Re-release.)

EMBASSY.—"Angels One Five," air drama, starring Michael Denison, Jack Hawkins, Dulcie Gray. Plus featurettes.

LYCEUM.—"Penny Princess," technicolor comedy, starring Dirk Bogarde, Yolande Donlan. Plus ★★ "The Lady Vanishes," mystery, starring Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave. (Re-release.)

MAYFAIR.—"Vicki," mystery, starring Jeanne Crain, Jean Peters, Elliott Reid. Plus "The Rose Bowl Story," cinecolor football drama, starring Marshall Thompson, Vera Miles.

PALACE.—"Stop, You're Killing Me," technicolor comedy, starring Broderick Crawford, Claire Trevor. Plus "Sugarfoot," Western, starring Randolph Scott, Adele Jergens. (Re-release.)

PARK.—"Gun Belt," technicolor Western, starring George Montgomery, Tab Hunter. Plus "So Young So Bad," drama, starring Catherine McLeod, Paul Henried. (Re-release.)

SAVOY.—"Dr. Knock," French-language comedy, starring Louis Jouvet, Jean Brochard, Jane Marken. Plus featurettes.

Talking of Films

By M. J. McMAHON

OUR FILM GRADINGS

★★★ Excellent
★★ Above average
★ Average
No stars—below average or not yet reviewed.

★★ *Give A Girl A Break*

METRO'S new technicolor musical "Give a Girl a Break" presents a fiesta of dancing and some songs in a pleasant story about show business.

Marge and Gower Champion, Debbie Reynolds, and two newcomers — fresh-faced Bob Fosse and Helen Wood, a striking exponent of contemporary-style dances—all perform with grace, timing, and zest agreeable to watch.

Covering familiar ground, the story tells of the aspirations, heartaches, romances, and success of the three young women, all of whom are eager for the break that will win the star role in a forthcoming Broadway show. Gower Champion, Bob Fosse, and Kurt Kasznar are the girls' theatrical sponsors and admirers.

Interest grows as first one girl and then another looks like making the grade. When the logical contender eventually wins the role, another story twist changes the picture once more.

With several past successes to his credit, director Stanley Donen appears to try too hard in the staging of production numbers. The simpler dance routines are most effective.

In Sydney—St. James.

★★ *Sangaree*

PARAMOUNT'S technicolor period adventure "Sangaree" is the best combined 3-D, wide-screen melodrama to date.

It is one of the films requiring polaroid viewing spectacles.

"Sangaree" demonstrates that, used as an adjunct to screen action, 3-D is an asset.

A tavern fight, in which Fernando Lamas looks as though he will slither into the stalls, a hurtling barrel, and a thrown knife that makes you flinch involuntarily are obvious examples of the 3-D medium.

There is occasional blurring of technicolor outdoor shots in depth, but generally the effect is good.

A shallow and cloying romance between masterful Fernando Lamas and fiery Southern belle Arlene Dahl is overdone.

However, subsidiary action, which stems from smuggling activities of Francis L. Sullivan and his unpleasant son John Sutton, plus elaborate settings and costumes help make up for other shortcomings.

All the film's conflict takes place around "Sangaree," a mansion somewhere near Savannah in the years immediately following the American War of Independence.

In Sydney—Victory.

News from studios

From London and Hollywood

ELIZABETH TAYLOR is now fit and ready to take the floor of a British studio in the lead role opposite Stewart Granger in "Beau Brummell." Michael Wilding is trying to wangle staying behind with her. They want to have an English Christmas here.

* * *

LESLIE CARON is coming to London—but not to film. Leslie has been lured back to the ballet and will figure as a guest artist with the famous Ballet de Paris in "The Sleeping Beauty."

* * *

BRITISH star Roger Livesy, playing on Broadway, fell ill. His doctor ordered an operation, but Roger did not have enough dollars to pay for it. He had to fly back to England to have the operation. Said Livesy, "Everything in the United States is three times as dear—including medical attention."

* * *

TIGHTENING her grip on British stardom is perky Susan Stephen. Only twenty-two, Susan has just finished her sixth British film in her two-year screen career. You'll see her opposite Alan Ladd in his first British film, "The Red Beret."

ON OTHER PAGES

Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz in color, P. 61
"Under My Hat" instalment, P. 62



Now! Prove it yourself

—IN YOUR OWN HOME!

MOST PEOPLE know that Persil beat all other washing powders for whiteness in the famous English Good Housekeeping Test. Now Australian housewives can make this test themselves next washday.

Take two white things equally soiled, say a couple of towels, or handkerchiefs, or pillow slips. Wash one in Persil and one in any other washing powder, following the instructions on the packet. One towel will come up much whiter than the other— *the Persil one*! Yes, you can spot the winner— in your own home!

And the secret? Why does Persil wash whiter? Because of its millions of tiny oxygen suds. They search out the dirt as nothing else can. Yes, that's the secret of Persil whiteness—complete, thorough cleanness.

Coloureds, woollens too! Coloureds come up crisp and gay after you've washed them in Persil. It's so gentle, too, perfect in fact for your softest woollens and daintiest fine things.



YES, PERSIL WASHES GENTLY

MRS. H. V. JESSON, *President of the Housewives Association of N.S.W., vouches for Persil's gentleness. She says, "I've used Persil for many years and have always found it kind and gentle to my clothes."*



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P.102.WWHPs

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At last I'm free to look after my little family— thanks to Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids



This human story will interest many sufferers who should be enjoying radiant health

The whole thing started four months ago, when I was advised to take Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoid treatment.
Gone is the pain in my knees. Gone is the crippling of my hands that refused to allow me to dress or undress myself. Gone is that dreadful depression and hopelessness that surely was getting me down. Gone the dreadful wakeful nights. Gone are the nights when I was barricaded up with pillows—pillows under my knees; they were so swollen and sore I could not stand the pressure one on the other. Gone is the pillow I had to have on my chest to rest the painful arm, as it was too sore to lie on . . . For the first time in a good many years, at last I'm free from pain—free to look after my little family. Many thanks to Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids for my new happiness.



Four months ago my hands were so useless I couldn't dress myself.



A dreadful depression and hopelessness was getting me down.



Sleepless at night with pain, I had to have pillows under my swollen knees and arms.



Now I can enjoy myself and do my work again.

If YOU suffer backache, rheumatism, neuritis, lumbago, sick headaches, Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids will help you, too!

—as they helped this young mother and her family. Theirs is the story of thousands of other Australians. Rheumatism, Backache, Sciatica, Lumbago, Stiffness in muscles and joints, Kidney and Bladder Weakness, Dizziness, Headaches and Simple High Blood Pressure are so common to-day that these and kindred ailments cost Australians approximately £25,000,000 a year. Much suffering and loss can be ended by helping your bloodstream to wash away crippling everyday poisons with a course of Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids.

How Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids act

Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoid treatment cleanses your body of the germs and poisons that rob you of your natural health and energy and which so often cause Headaches, Dizziness, Simple High Blood Pressure, Rheumatics, Kidney and Bladder trouble, Backache, and similar aches and pains. In these times of stress, Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoid treatment will restore you to normal good health and keep you fit and well to enjoy your life as you should. Start Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoid treatment to-day and see how your tiredness, your aches and pains are quickly relieved, leaving you filled with new energy and cheerfulness.

Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids are safe and sure

They are a natural prescription, a great medicine containing Thionine. They are a tried and proven family treatment that has brought relief to generations of Australians from the painful, crippling poisons of bacteria and uric acid. If you, or yours, suffer in this way, get a flask of Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids to-day and start a course of this famous treatment. Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids will quickly relieve you of that unhappy depressed feeling—those aches and pains that are sapping your strength—and give you a new lease of life and youthful energy.



Start a course TO-DAY

Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids

7'6 and 4'- EVERYWHERE





Loss of some of your youthful suppleness is often the first sign of uric acid accumulating in your muscles and joints. In such cases as these, Dr. Mackenzie's Menthoids are a valuable treatment for cleansing your body of the poisons that cripple you.

Dr MACKENZIES MENTHOIDS

FAMOUS TREATMENT FOR THE BLOOD



POT PLANTS can be grown in the garden, the glasshouse, or indoors, and are becoming more and more popular with home gardeners. Good drainage, plenty of fibrous material to hold moisture, and regular watering are necessary if the plants are to flourish.

POT PLANT CULTURE

Most plants that are grown in the garden can be potted up and taken indoors where, with ordinary care, they will thrive.

THERE is no need, of course, to take pot plants indoors. They can be put on walls, steps, and in prominent places in the garden; they can be stacked on shelves in the bushhouse, glasshouse, or conservatory.

But in cities where gardens are small, pot plants can be the pride of the indoor gardener, and many people grow them.

Pot plant culture was restricted for many years to aspidistras, coleus, rex and fibrous-rooted begonias, a calceolaria or two, and, perhaps, a bromeliad or peperomia, but lately the more exotic cymbidium and other orchidaceous plants have overshadowed these.

Tuberous-rooted begonias, airpines, sansevierias, saintpaulias, caladiums, cacti in variety, philodendrons, gloxinias, achimenes, gesneras, kalanchoes, zebra-plants, podocarpus, acorus, synogoniums, many succulents, most of the primulas, vinca variegata, camellias, azaleas, saxifragas, selaginellas are species that do well indoors.

These plants do not all respond in the same way to the same conditions, however, and it is worth while studying their individual needs if the best results are to be obtained.

Tuberous-rooted begonias, for instance, need semi-shade until they start to bud up, when they should be given almost full morning sunshine.

Gloxinias, being frailer, need shade at first and then diffused sunlight during flowering.

Saintpaulias do best facing east most of the time, and should be very carefully watered and handled.

Tropical plants like caladiums, crotons, the highly colored philodendrons, and dieffenbachias should not be grown in the cooler parts of Australia unless the gardener has a glasshouse and some means of providing heat.

The ordinary garden shrubs such as hydrangeas, camellias, azaleas, gardenias (particularly gradicans), ruellias, dracarnas, daphnes, dwarf deutzias, chorizemas, cupheas, many boronias, and abelia can all be grown in deep tubs or large earthenware pots.

The novice gardener should bear in mind that in our dry climate, plants grown in pots, shallow troughs, and tins, need good drainage, plenty of fibrous material to hold moisture, and regular watering. Failure to do these things may result in the death of the plants.

An excellent potting mixture can be made by mixing up decayed vegetable matter (garden compost, leaf mould, old cow manure) with some sharp sand, plus one-third ordinary garden loam.

Ideally, plants should be potted when they are dormant or nearly so, but the job can

GARDENING

be carried out successfully even in seasons of active growth, provided the plants are not in flower.

Many trailing or semi-climbing plants like gesneras, achimenes, hoya carnosa, Kenilworth ivy, trailing fuchsias can be grown in pots indoors or in the glass or bush house, provided ample space is given the roots, which are more vigorous than in plants of dwarf habit.

Sturdy, vigorous plants such as Monstera deliciosa, the tall-growing philodendrons, birds-nest ferns, and lapageria should also be given ample depth for their deep foraging roots. They should have plenty of liquid manure, or they will soon show distress and lose color.

Many bulbous plants like daffodils, jonquils, hyacinths, tulips, lachenalias, hippeastrums, and liliums can also be grown indoors or in the bushhouse.

They need plenty of depth, and the soil must be fibrous and able to retain moisture. Narcissi, if forced first under glass, need have only their roots covered with fibrous material in shallow pots, but they should not be repotted until the buds have appeared. Ferns of many kinds, such as adiantums (maiden hair), asplenums (birdsnest), davallias, polypodiums, polystichums, cyrtomiums, pteris, selaginellas, should be repotted in early spring. They should be watered regularly and watched closely for scales, which often ruin their fronds.

One of the smallest ferns grown indoors is the Japanese holly fern. The fronds are tufted with dark-green upright fronds about 8in. or 9in. tall.

The graceful maidenhair fern, which grows well on the edge of running water or in boggy places, needs well-drained, peaty soil when potted up.

Many fruiting plants can also be grown indoors.

The best of the indoor fruiting plants is probably ardisia, which has good, shiny, dark-green leaves and whorls of bright-red berries following the tiny white flowers. These berries last a whole year until the second crop arrives.

Others that crop quite well in pots are the Jerusalem cherry, cumquats, dwarf pomegranate, surinam cherry (Eugenia uniflora), and the bright red-fruited capsicums.

It is possible to pot up alyssum (all varieties), abutilons, snapdragons (dwarf types), astilbes, azaleas (dwarf types for preference), begonias (all sorts), browallia speciosa (annual, blue-flowering plant), calla lilies, most campanulas, all camellias, most varieties of chrysanthemum, cinerarias, clivias, cyclamens (grown from seed each year), ericas (dwarf types), and practically all but the tall varieties of fuchsia.

Geraniums and their close relations, pelargoniums, also make magnificent pot plants.

—R. G. Edwards.

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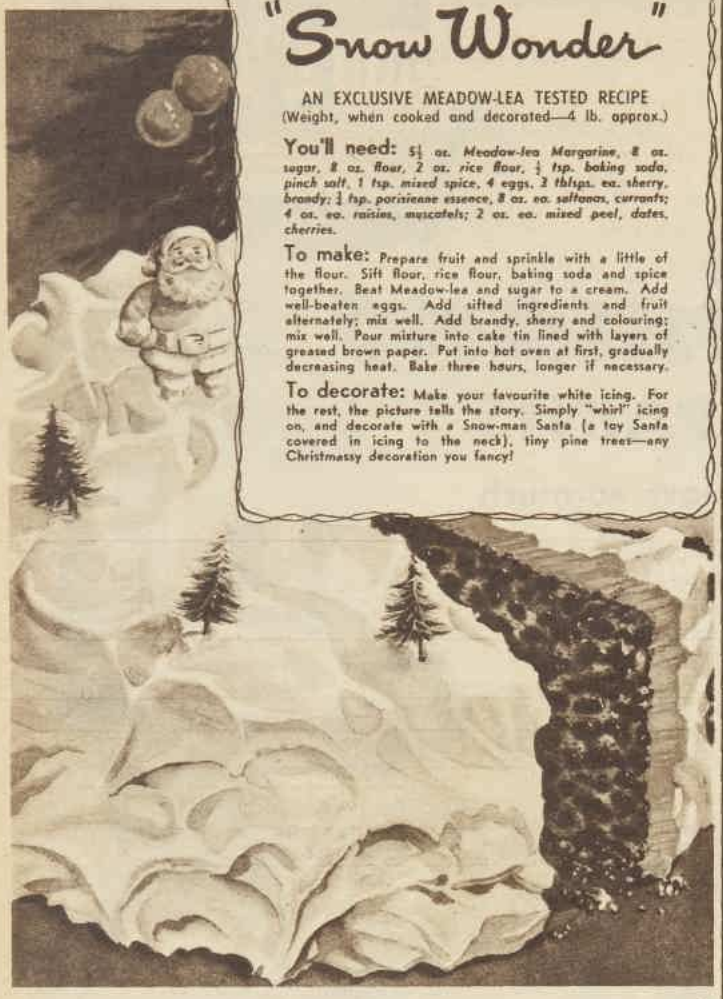


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The Easiest, Merriest Christmas Cake You've Ever Made!



"Snow Wonder"

AN EXCLUSIVE MEADOW-LEA TESTED RECIPE
(Weight, when cooked and decorated—4 lb. approx.)

You'll need: 5½ oz. *Meadow-lea Margarine*, 8 oz. sugar, 8 oz. flour, 2 oz. rice flour, ½ tsp. baking soda, pinch salt, 1 tsp. mixed spice, 4 eggs, 2 tblsps. ea. sherry, brandy; ½ tsp. portiieane essence, 8 oz. ea. sultanas, currants; 4 oz. ea. raisins, muscatels; 2 oz. ea. mixed peel, dates, cherries.

To make: Prepare fruit and sprinkle with a little of the flour. Sift flour, rice flour, baking soda and spice together. Beat Meadow-lea and sugar to a cream. Add well-beaten eggs. Add sifted ingredients and fruit alternately; mix well. Add brandy, sherry and colouring; mix well. Pour mixture into cake tin lined with layers of greased brown paper. Put into hot oven at first, gradually decreasing heat. Bake three hours, longer if necessary.

To decorate: Make your favourite white icing. For the rest, the picture tells the story. Simply "whirl" icing on, and decorate with a Snow-man Santa (a toy Santa covered in icing to the neck), tiny pine trees—any Christmassy decoration you fancy!

Mix it in minutes with New cream-in-a-twink Meadow-lea!

NEW quick-mix Meadow-lea makes short work of *all* your Christmas cooking . . . and gets *scrumptious* results! However you use it . . . as a spread, in baking, as a seasoning for Christmassy sauces . . . delicious new silky-smooth Meadow-lea means good eating AND . . . at much less cost. Order lots of low-priced Meadow-lea for all the cooking, all the entertaining you'll be doing between now and Christmas!

No doubt about Meadow-lea's goodness! No other churned spread—at any price—is richer in food energy, or a finer year-round source of protective Vitamins A and D!

Meadow-lea

TABLE MARGARINE



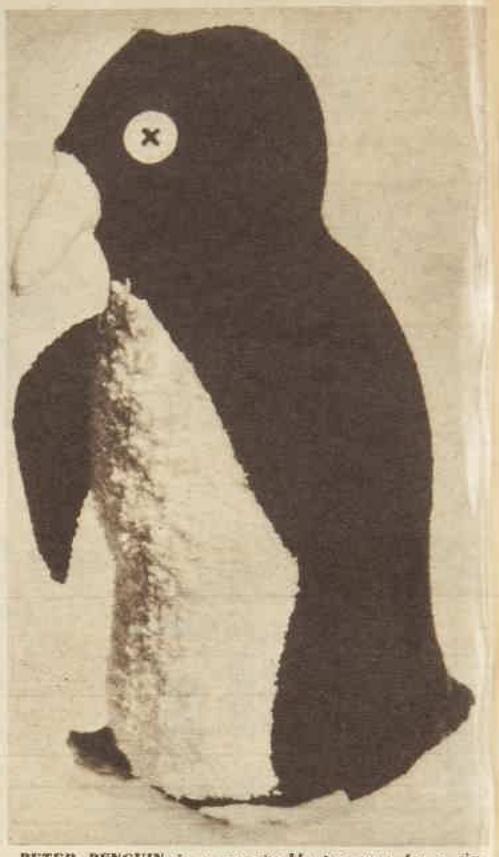
ONLY 1/3 HALF POUND

(Slightly higher in the Country.)

ME.32.143a

Make Peter Penguin

● ***Children will love Peter Penguin, a toy which can be made easily from pieces of black and yellow felt and scraps of white towelling.***



PETER PENGUIN is a manageable toy even for a six-months-old baby. He can be made in an hour or so, and will help to fill a little tot's Christmas stocking.

PETER is filled with cotton wadding and has bright buttons for eyes. Here are the directions:

Materials: Two 9in. squares of black felt, scraps of white towelling and yellow felt, 2 small buttons for eyes, cotton wadding for stuffing.

Patterns: Make patterns for the diagrams shown in which one square equals 1in. Solid spots mark edge to be laid to a fold.

Cutting Directions: Cut 2 pieces in black felt from pattern A for head and front body; cut 2 pieces in black felt from pattern B for back body; cut 1 piece in towelling from pattern C for chest; cut 1 piece in black felt from pattern D for base; cut 2 pieces in yellow felt from pattern E for beak; cut 4 pieces in yellow felt from pattern F for feet.

To Make: Lay two back sections together and oversew down centre back seam. Make a small tuck on either side of this seam as indicated on the pattern.

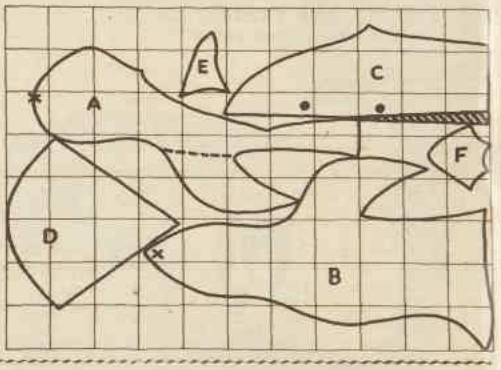
Sew front head pieces together between X's. Lay front and back body pieces wrong sides together and oversew from top of head down the sides at fins to the base.

Make a dart on the towelling chest section as shaded in diagram. Turn in all raw edges of this section ¼in. to the wrong side and base. Sew chest in position to front body. With stab stitching, sew front and back flippers together down the broken line on pattern A.

Stab stitch the beak pieces together, leaving the short side open. Stuff and sew in position on face. Sew buttons in position for eyes.

Stuff body firmly and sew base section D to body.

Lay two foot pieces together and stab stitch all round. Sew to base of body and repeat with other foot sections.



A FEW SCRAPS of felt and towelling provide the materials from which these patterns are cut for the Peter Penguin toy. To make the patterns, copy this diagram on a large sheet of paper. (Scale: One square to 1in.)

Luxury jacket in quilting

A quilted jacket like this would cost several guineas to buy, but you can make it yourself for the cost of the materials.

THE pattern for the "Tulip" jacket and the traced muslin for the quilting, plus directions for making, can be had from Fashion Patterns Pty. Ltd., 645 Harris Street, Ultimo, Sydney (postal address Box 4060, G.P.O., Sydney).

For sizes 32in. to 38in., the jacket pattern costs 2/-; traced muslin for quilting, price, 6/6. Postage 6½d. extra.

Another lovely quilted jacket design, featuring a rose with trailing leaves, may be obtained in the same sizes at the same prices.



"TULIP" JACKET. This elegant jacket was made from satin. Traced muslin for the quilting and jacket patterns in sizes 32in. to 38in., with directions for making, are available.

National Library of Australia http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4383104

BEACH HOUSE

Built on a steep hill on one of the foreshores of Bronte Beach, N.S.W., Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Toomey's modern home contrasts sharply with the red-tiled, gabled houses that are to be seen in this older, thickly populated Sydney suburb.

IN designing the house the chief problem was to give the rooms the benefit of the view to the north over Bronte Beach, and yet fit the house on the cramped and difficult site.

The north side of the house at one point is only four feet from the road, yet this was the side which needed large windows to take advantage of the view.

Fortunately the road is well below the land on the north, and the architects, Messrs. Ancher, Mortlock, and Murray, by raising the house on "wing-wall" foundations to make it even higher, and surrounding it with a cantilevered balcony, were able to build the living and dining rooms on this side entirely of glass without sacrificing privacy.

The kitchen and the two bedrooms also enjoy the view.

Above the oiled cypress weatherboarding on the balcony, the balustrade on the north has clear panels of glass which give protection from wind and do not shut out the view. On the west side the panels are painted pale blue.

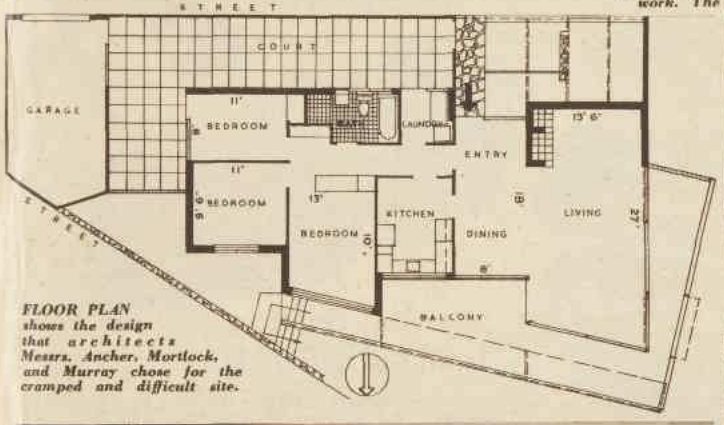
The southern side of the house has no view, and the back gate, laundry door, bathroom, and garage are in this part of the house.

The architects decided that the laundry, bathroom, and the main entrance to the house should be placed on the south side so that the more important rooms would have the view to the north.

As the house is within ten feet of the street on this side, an enclosed courtyard was made by building a high brick wall on the boundary. This screens the laundry, bathroom, and drying-yard from the street.



NORTHERN SIDE of Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Toomey's home at Bronte, N.S.W., shows how "wing-wall" foundations were used to raise the house well above street level so that the glass-walled living and dining areas would have privacy. The outside of the house is white painted brick with white woodwork. The oiled cypress weatherboarding on the balcony balustrade provides contrast to the white.



FLOOR PLAN shows the design that architects Messrs. Ancher, Mortlock, and Murray chose for the cramped and difficult site.



HIGH BRICK WALL on the boundary line of the south side of the site extends from the entrance court to the garage and encloses an L-shaped courtyard. The wall also conceals the laundry, bathroom, and drying-yard from the street, only ten yards away.



GARAGE AND DRYING-YARD, which are screened by vertical slats, are designed so that the long line of the house is not broken. The flat roof is surfaced with white marble chips. One section of the double chimney contains the hot water service tank.



NURSERY, which opens on to the enclosed courtyard, has a soft color scheme of French-grey, pink, and white tones.



GLASS WALLS in the living area give a splendid view of Bronte Beach and adjoining headlands of Tamarama Beach. The clear glass panels in the balcony balustrade allow the family to enjoy the view even when they are sitting in the room. Picture shows Mrs. Toomey and her son, David, watching surfers and picnickers on the beach.

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This New Antihistamine Cream brings speedy relief from SUNBURN, HIVES, INSECT BITES and STINGS

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Royal silhouette

This charming cameo-like needle picture of Her Majesty the Queen has been designed as a souvenir of the Royal visit.

THE garland setting, surmounted by a crown, is made up of floral emblems, and includes the rose, the thistle, and the bluebells of Scotland.

The emblems spray can be traced on to house linens for easy embroidery. The miniature crown would make an unusual corner decoration for a fine linen handkerchief.

How to make the wall picture:

Materials Required: 1 skein Clark's "Anchor" stranded cotton (black); 1 piece of fine cream linen measuring 12in. by 10in.; 1 piece of cardboard for mounting measuring 6½in. by 5½in.; black frame to fit mount; 1 Milwards "Gold Seal" crewel needle, No. 9.

Trace the design illustrated below on to the centre of the fabric, reversing the emblems spray for the right-hand side (centre shown by dotted lines). For the embroidery use one strand of cotton and follow the diagram illustrated at lower right for the placing of stitches. The numbers indicate the stitches and are: (1) satin stitch; (2) long and short stitch; (3) straight stitch; (4) stem stitch.

Press finished embroidery well on wrong side.

To Make Up: Lay the embroidery evenly over a cardboard mount, fold surplus fabric to back of board and take long stitches from side to side, first vertically, then horizontally. Pull stitches firmly until work lies flat and even.



REMINISCENT of a cameo brooch is this needle picture featuring a silhouette likeness of Her Majesty the Queen.





TRACE this design on to a piece of cream linen. Reverse the emblems spray for the right-hand side of picture and then embroider as suggested above.



EMBROIDERY CHART. Numbers represent stitches to be used in the needle picture. See article for details.

Natural Feeding

MANY young mothers do not make a success of natural feeding because of certain painful conditions of the breast in the early nursing period.

There is no perfect substitute for breast milk, but in some cases the child has to be weaned in the first or second month of its life and so is deprived of the food that is its birthright.

A leaflet dealing with the prevention of complications that make weaning necessary has been prepared by Sister Mary Jacob, our Mothercraft Nurse. You can obtain this leaflet by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to The Australian Women's Weekly Mothercraft Service Bureau, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney.

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These *new* Cheese Waffles of Peek Frean's are tasty... tangy... invitingly savoury... for they combine in the most delicious way all the tangy zest of Cheddar cheese with the tender crispness of miniature waffles. Why don't you try them to-day?

SO ECONOMICAL— ABOUT 96 TO THE LB



MAKERS OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS VITA-WEAT CRISPBREAD

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LUCILLE BALL AND DESI ARNAZ

● Lucille Ball and her husband, Desi Arnaz, who are stars of America's top television show "I Love Lucy," make a comeback to movies in an M.G.M. comedy titled "The Long, Long Trailer."

FOR Lucille, the comedienne who was made a star by Hollywood and then forgotten, "Trailer" is an eventful film because it is the first picture in which she and her Latin-American husband co-star as a team.

It depicts the comic trials and tribulations of Lucille and Desi, a honeymoon couple, during their travels across America in an enormous trailer named "The Whale."

Filmed in Ansco Color, the new film will show to best advantage Lucille's red-gold hair and big blue eyes and Desi's dark Cuban looks.

Hollywood rolled out the red carpet of welcome when the couple arrived from New York to begin work at Metro.

Three years earlier they had left California to seek a livelihood elsewhere because the studios considered Lucille to be washed up in movies.

But with a background of almost 20 years' experience in films and radio as a comedienne, singer, straight actress, and dancer, Lucille refused to be beaten by Hollywood.

Searching for a job in which she and Desi could work together, she dreamed up a comedy act in which they portrayed a man and wife.

They took it on an extended tour of American nightclubs in 1950 and the

Film Fan Fare
Conducted by M. J. McMANON

enthusiastic acclaim it received convinced them the act would do very well on television.

From this experiment their successful television show, "I Love Lucy," emerged.

"I Love Lucy" is a comedy built around exaggerated, everyday events in the life of a slightly zany husband and wife. It is an act of wit, mirth, and comic situations, and reaches an estimated audience of 8,000,000 fans weekly.

Not only was the show a hit, making Lucille Ball the first Hollywood actress to star in the new medium, but it partly fulfilled an ambition to star together that she and Arnaz had shared for a long time.

Now that Hollywood has come into line by signing them as a romantic movie team for "The Long, Long Trailer," their ambition is fully realised.

The 1940 marriage of Lucille Ball and Cuban bandleader Desi Arnaz followed a love-at-first-sight meeting on the set of "Too Many Girls," the only film they ever made together.

The first few years of their marriage were somewhat stormy. They separated once but were reconciled.

They have two children. Their daughter, Lucie Desiree, was born in 1951. Ten-months-old Desiderio, jun., is one of the most famous children in America because he was written into the script of "I Love Lucy" before he was born so that Lucille could remain in the show as long as possible.

Now 42 years old, Lucille Ball recently signed an 8,000,000-dollar contract to extend her television programme for two and a half years.



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BACKACHE Relieved

'the result was wonderful'



PHOTO POSED BY A MODEL

Mrs. A. M. H., has *repeatedly* proved that backache responds promptly to the gently relieving action of De Witt's Pills. In 1938 "the result was wonderful" (her own words then). Now, comes a letter revealing her redoubled enthusiasm for a medicine which, to-day, helps *all* her family. If other backache sufferers will carefully read them they will certainly know where to turn for *lasting* relief.

SHE SAID THEN in a letter dated 18th October, 1938,

"I had a very bad back and was getting up five or six times a night. I got a small bottle of De Witt's Pills and the result was wonderful."

—*signed* A. M. H., Tenterfield, N.S.W.

SHE SAYS NOW in a letter dated 4th June, 1953.

"I am still a user of your valuable pills. I have told several of my friends about them. My mother . . . had a bad back and after I gave her six of your pills there wasn't any more bad back. My husband, who is 65, is a user of the pills now and won't have anything else."

—*signed* A. M. H., Tenterfield, N.S.W.

(The originals of these letters can be seen at our Melbourne office).

Rheumatic pains are often a sign that your kidneys are sluggish and failing to expel waste and poisons from your system. De Witt's Pills are specially made to act on the kidneys, gently stimulating them back to their proper action. Within 24 hours of taking the first dose you will have visual evidence that De Witt's Pills are working directly on the kidneys, clearing away the impurities that are causing your pain. So turn to De Witt's Pills for relief. Get a bottle to-day from your chemist or storekeeper.

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Want to be the belle of the beach and ballroom? Then *never* let superfluous hair spoil your charm. Remove this glamour-killer with wonderful Veet cream. Just apply Veet. Leave for three minutes. Then wash off. There's not a trace of hair left. No cuts or scratches. Coarse re-growth is retarded.

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VEET hair-removing cream

Lovely Maureen O'Neil, 21-year-old Beauty Queen, says Veet hair-removing cream is a beauty "must."

AT CHEMISTS & STORES

From Under my Hat

By HEDDA HOPPER

SYNOPSIS: Early days in Hollywood are rewarding to Hedda Hopper, but after the switch over to sound pictures she finds the going tougher.

A radio contract helps to fill the financial gap. Later Hedda becomes a successful columnist with a syndicated movie column. A feud with rival Louella Parsons develops.

Mae West philosophises during a personal interview and Marlene Dietrich is decorated for war work.

Visiting her daughter in Hollywood, Hedda Hopper's mother meets the parents of Hedy Lamarr, Bette Davis, and Charles Boyer at a show. NOW READ ON:

"WHY," Mother smiled as she looked at herself in a full-length mirror, "I'm just like a movie star! I wish Dad could see me tonight."

As is our custom at premieres, there was an intermission. Mother rose and said, "Good. Now we can go home."

"The picture's only half over," I said.

"Long, isn't it?" she replied as she sat down again.

Later we went to supper at Ciro's with Edgar Bergen and Ken Murray. Edgar ordered champagne; my mother ordered milk, and I followed suit.

She loved looking at the pretty stars, as she might enjoy a rosebush in her own garden. But she heard not a word that was spoken.

Next morning she asked if they were important people we'd had supper with.

"That was Edgar Bergen, Mother."

She looked at me unknowing. "On your radio you've heard him as Charlie McCarthy."

"Was that Charlie McCarthy? Why, he doesn't look a bit like he sounds."

"The other man was Ken Murray—a famous comedian."

"He looked sad for a funny man," said my mother.

She stayed with me for months. One of her favorite people was Laura Hope Crews, who invited us for a week-end at her Santa Monica home.

In the middle of the night I thought I heard a sound in the dressing-room which connected our rooms, and got up to look. There was my mother looking out over the ocean.

"Whatever are you doing this for?" I asked.

"I just love to look at the Pacific—it's so big."

We drove along the beach and she was fascinated by the camp fires of picnickers and thought how fortunate the young people of California were to have a playground so near their homes. Why, at home you travel miles to go fishing in a river!

On the night of her birthday we gathered together those she'd learned to love: Laura Hope Crews, Janet Gaynor and Adrian, Newell Van Derhoef, John Roach, Frances Marion, Jessie Christian, and Dema Harshbarger. Mother was covered with orchids from her shoulder to her waist. Adrian had given her a box of tuberous begonias, which she kept beside her the whole evening.

While greeting the guests, Mother overheard me tell them we were celebrating her eighty-fourth birthday. I thought it was. But she turned to Dema and whispered, "You know, I'm really eighty-five. But if it helps Elda any to say I'm eighty-four, I don't mind."

Two of the guests thought, as I had, to send her singing telegrams. To this day I've never received one on my own birthday. When the first one arrived, the messenger boy came into the dining-room and I explained what it meant. She was so pleased. When the second one arrived, Mother sang with him. When the third messenger came in, she started to sing before he could begin. He let her carry through to the end, then said, "Lady, I thank you. I can't sing as nice as you, so I didn't try. I'll tell 'em back at the office that you delivered your own telegram."

I offered her a glass of champagne. In all her life she'd never sampled anything except elderberry wine, which she made herself. She refused, but I insisted. She looked reprovingly at me over the rim of her glass as though I'd led her into mortal sin. After the first sip, she took another, then finished the glass. "Why, it doesn't taste a bit like vinegar and its not as strong as my wine."

I didn't know how she would receive the beauty kit Dema gave her, because there was no vanity in her. She was pleased as Punch. Later I heard the story. My maid had related to Dema how Mother had watched me every morning as I put on my make-up. When I'd gone, she did everything to her face that I'd done to mine. So Dema bought her the works. When she left for home she carried it on the plane in her hand. It was too precious to be checked with her luggage.

We spent Easter at the Yucca Loma Ranch on the Mojave Desert, and on Easter Sunday morning I took Mother for a drive. The floor of the desert was covered with every colored wildflower. We left the car and walked among them. Mother said, "This is the first Easter I've missed going to church since my childhood. I like being with you and Bill and your friends, but I do miss our minister and my church."

"Mother," I said, "look about. The snow-covered mountains in the distance, at our feet a carpet of wildflowers, overhead a cloudless sky. Have you ever seen a church as beautiful as this setting? You don't have to worship indoors. You can worship God right here. This is His Cathedral."

She looked at me thoughtfully and said, "I never thought of it that way." Slowly she got down on her knees and bent her head. Elda Furry knelt and prayed beside her.

Before boarding the plane for home she said, "Since I've seen how you live now, I won't have to include you in my prayers every night."

"You mean to say you still pray for me?" I asked.

"Of course. I have ever since you were born."

I wrote a column about Mother after she died, and included this story. Not long ago I called on Trixie Friganza, the well-known musical-comedy star, who lives at the Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy. She's almost bedridden from arthritis, but loves living in the school because of her contact with the Good Sisters and her daily visits from the lovely young girls starting their education.

As I sat beside her she opened a scrapbook and took out the column I'd written about Mother.

"This is the best thing you ever wrote," Trixie said. "And I think you should know that since her death I've taken over for your mother. I say a prayer for you every night."

(Copyright)



COLUMNIST HEDDA HOPPER surrounded by some of the 65,000 hats that came in from housewives all over America when she took part in a hat hunt in 1946 to find the most unusual, distinctive, and original chapeaux in the country.

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TIME IS THE ART OF THE SWISS

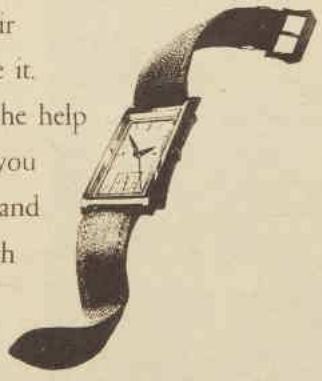


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Your jeweller's knowledge is your safeguard

The WATCHMAKERS OF SWITZERLAND

SW.56.56

Continuing

The Frightened Wife

from page 5

to tell it now." She had grown pale. "Somehow he'd learned about what I was doing. I think Mr. Jamison, upstairs, complained to the superintendent about my typing. The floors are very thin. Then he may have followed Martha Simmons the last time I met her in Central Park. I don't think she told him about me, but he knew she was an agent. It was on her office door."

"I see. Then what?"

"I had no idea he was going for Billy. I almost fell over when he brought him in. But Billy was excited. He kissed me and then ran into his room to see if his toys were still there. That was when Fred told me what he wanted."

She almost broke down, and Forsythe sat down beside her and took her hand.

"It's all right, my dear," he said. "They know you didn't shoot him."

"He was in trouble," she went on in a half whisper. "He'd been selling stolen cars—hot cars, he called them—and the Automobile Squad or something was after him. They hadn't got him yet, but in a day or two he'd have to leave town. I was to draw the money out of the bank and give it to him. If I didn't he'd take little Billy with him and shoot it out if he had to. I knew what that meant. They'd both be killed."

"You've made a pretty good case against yourself," Close said wryly. "What about the gun, Mrs. Collier? Did he threaten you with it?"

"No. He looked for it, but he couldn't find it. I told him I hadn't seen it for several days, and he was frantic. That's when he began yelling at me. I'd turned down Billy's bed and gone to the kitchen to get some hot milk for him. He'd had a long, cold drive. But it wasn't ready. I was coming back when I heard the shot."

"Where was the boy?"

"He was still in his room, I suppose. I had no time to look around."

"Wouldn't it be possible the boy saw who fired the shots?"

"What does he say? He'll tell you if he knows."

There it was. Forsythe took a tighter grip on her hand, and Close looked unhappy.

"I'm afraid I have to tell you something," he said. "I don't want to, but it's vital. You see, we haven't located Billy. There was no boy there when we got there that night."

She lay back on her pillows and closed her eyes. Forsythe felt her trembling.

"Where is he?" she said faintly. "He must be somewhere."

"Well, it's probably not so bad as it sounds," Close spoke encouragingly. "He is six, and I understand he is a pretty intelligent lad. Personally I think he was scared and beat it. Have you any idea where he would go? It was his neighborhood. He must have known plenty of kids there."

She brightened somewhat, and proceeded to name a half-dozen families. Close soberly wrote them down, although they had already been questioned without results. He put his notebook away and got up.

"I'll look him up," he said as he picked up his hat. "You see, we didn't know about him until rather late. Don't worry. We'll locate him all right."

Forsythe did not leave when Close did. He sat beside the bed, watching the color come back into her face and the trembling stop. She even smiled at him.

"Of course that's what happened," she said. "With Fred gone and me here, they would just keep him. Mike Hellinger might know. Have they talked to him?"

"I don't know. It was some little time after the shots when Jamison got up his courage and notified him. Plenty of time for Billy to run, probably."

"You've been very kind to me, Wade," she said. "How can I ever thank you?"

"We'll talk about it when you get well."

"I never made a will after all, did I?"

"You don't need it now, my dear."

She was free now, he thought. Free as air. Free to love, even to marry.

He left soon after. But he carried with him the picture of her smiling at him as he left her, and for the first time a bit of hope which he did not formulate, even to himself.

* * * *

Some time after eleven that morning, Forsythe presented himself at the Gotham Trust Company's big bronze doors and asked to see Mr. Stone, the president. It took his insistence on urgent business to admit him to this august presence, but once in he lost no time.

"I am here about two murders," he said flatly. "Also about a woman who has been shot and is in the hospital. Does the name Jessica Blake mean anything to you?"

Mr. Stone looked startled. "Murder!" he said. "We bankers are accused of a good many things, but scarcely that."

"I'd better explain all this," Forsythe said. "Jessica Blake is the pen name of a young woman who writes radio scripts. They pay her a lot of money. And according to her agent's files that money is here. I want to know about it."

The change from murder to banking was an obvious relief, especially as Forsythe offered his card. He looked up from it with a frown.

"My dear fellow," he said, "you're a lawyer. You know we don't give out information of that sort."

"You can tell me if she has an account or a safe-deposit box here. I'd rather not bring the police in, but if I have to I will."

The word "police," like "murder," stirred Mr. Stone to the depths of his soul. He recovered enough to press a button, which resulted in the appearance, rather like a jack-in-the-box, of an elegant young man, obviously a secretary.

"Find out if a Jessica Blake has an acount or a safe-deposit box here and let me know at once," he instructed. "I don't want figures. Just the facts."

The elegant young gentleman left smartly, and Mr. Stone lit a cigar and inspected Forsythe, who was not looking his best.

"This Blake woman—she's been murdered?"

"No. She's been accused of murder. She's innocent, of course. The police realise that now."

"I see. Who did she—who was she supposed to have killed?"

"Her husband," Forsythe said stiffly. "A man named Collier."

This seemed rather to stun Mr. Stone, who observed he had seen something about it in the papers. There was rather an unhappy silence, only broken by the return of the secretary.

"Sorry to have been so long, sir," he said, "but the bookkeeping department is pretty well demoralised. Flu, of

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Continuing The Frightened Wife

from page 64

course. As to the Blake account, there is none. Never has been, apparently."

Immediately all was well with Mr. Stone's world. He got up and clapped Forsythe jovially on the shoulder.

"So you see we haven't murdered anybody," he said. "There's a mistake somewhere, of course. Sorry not to be more helpful."

"I don't see how it's possible," Forsythe said slowly. "I've seen the deposit receipts, in your own slips."

"My dear boy! For fifty years we have borne an unblemished reputation. If there is no Jessica Blake account on our books, there is no such account."

There was no suavity in Mr. Stone now, in spite of the "dear boy." He glared at Forsythe.

"That's a dangerous statement you've made, and I hope you realise it, Mr. Forsythe."

"All right," Forsythe said stiffly. "I'll ask you another. Have you an account or safe-deposit box either for an Anne Collier or a Martha Simmons?"

The secretary stiffened. Evidently he read the papers, but he did not move. He eyed his chief, who was looking apoplectic.

"Will you tell me by what authority you come in and investigate the affairs of this bank?" he demanded.

But Forsythe was tired as well as bewildered. He was irritated too.

"As I said before, I thought you'd prefer me to the police."

"Very well," Mr. Stone said resignedly. "Got those names, Harold? And don't upset the whole staff. Just make a casual inquiry. It's not a matter of life and death."

"It's been a matter of two deaths already, and possibly a third," Forsythe said dryly.

A startled Harold scuttled from the room, and Mr. Stone took out a fresh cigar and bit off the end of it savagely.

This time the silence was not pleasant. Mr. Stone pretended to examine some papers on his desk, while Forsythe got up and, ignoring the banker's indignant looks, paced the floor. What was the trick? How had it been done? It would have been easy to fool Anne, but the deposit receipts had not only looked genuine, they had been genuine. There was something about the neat figures, the red stamp, the whole setup, which was unmistakable.

He was not surprised, when Harold returned, to learn that Anne Collier had no account whatever, but that Martha Simmons had three hundred and forty dollars in a checking account.

"I suppose it's too much to ask the names of your bookkeeping staff," he said stiffly.

"The police can get that, and you may be sure they will."

He left both men staring after him as he stalked out of the office. One thing was clear to him. The Jessica Blake cheques had either been cashed as they came in or else deposited under another name. In either case, Martha Simmons was guilty, but also, in either case, she had had an accomplice who forged the deposit slips.

How had it been done? Her landlady had said her "gentleman friend" was a broker, but was that necessarily true?

At his office he telephoned Close, but he was out and nobody knew where. When Miss Potter came in, he realised there were a number of people in the outer office. She closed the door carefully behind her, and he looked up in surprise.

"What's going on out there?" he demanded.

"The gentlemen of the Press," she said. "What did you expect? Or haven't you seen the morning papers?"

"I haven't had them. What about them?"

"They say you found a Martha Simmons' body last night, and were taken to a precinct stationhouse for questioning. It made quite a story, especially the wire you used. Want to see these boys? I'm afraid you'll have to, and I must say I've seen you look better. And for heaven's sake be polite. They can ruin you."

"Give me five minutes, Potter. I dressed in a hurry this morning."

She went out, and Forsythe surveyed himself in the washroom mirror. His eye was only faintly discolored, but he looked haggard, his tie was crooked and his hair showed the haste with which he had dressed. He made such repairs as he could and was once again the young member of the Bar and of an old New York family when at last Potter opened the door.

There were six reporters and two cameramen in the crowd which surged in, and he eyed them with alarm.

"No pictures, please," he said. "Not if you want me to talk. That's final."

Under protest, the photographers went out, and the others stood around the desk.

"Sorry to bother you, counsellor," one of them said. "but we understand you found this murdered woman last night."

"I did indeed," he agreed soberly. "I was on a tax case, and Miss Simmons' landlady sent me to her office. She said it was unusual for her to be away on Sunday, so she was worried."

"How did she look when you found her?" This was from one of the tabloids, and Forsythe ignored it.

In the main, however, they accepted what he told them. He had not been detained for questioning. Lieutenant Close was a friend of his, and they had discussed the situation together. However, one astute young man had been watching him.

"Does this tie up with the Collier case, counsellor?" he inquired. "I understand you're acquainted with Mrs. Collier."

"I knew Mrs. Collier's brother at college," Forsythe said shortly. "As for tying the two cases together, that's for the police. I'm only a lawyer."

"And how about that eye you've got?"

"Oh, that," Forsythe said blandly. "I ran into a door."

They laughed and finally went away. He found himself mopping his face after they had gone. It had been a strain, but he thought he had carried it off pretty well.

He tried to work that morning, but he accomplished little. Matters were not helped by a call from Margery, who seemed almost hysterical. "I've just seen the papers, Wade. I can't believe it."

"Not pleasant, Margery, but not too bad for me. I wasn't arrested."

"But the wire, Wade. Was it—was it like the piece you were hunting the other day?"

Forsythe lost such patience as he had left. "Oh, for heaven's sake! Do you think I strangled her?" he said angrily. "You've got the wire there, haven't you? I brought it back in a coat pocket."

"That's what I telephoned about," Margery said in a half whisper. "As soon as I read the paper I took it out to one of the docks and threw it in the river. Now the police want it."

"Fine! Wonderful!" he said. "Nothing like a sister to help me out. Thanks, Margery. If you don't hear from me I'll probably be in gaol."

He hung up and sat still, wondering what to do next. So Close was still suspicious of him. Probably they had tried the paraffin test on Anne's hands by this time and knew she had not fired the gun which killed Collier. He had to admit his own situation did not look too promising now, with the wire at the bottom of the East River.

He was somewhat relieved when Close called him an hour or so later. He even sounded pleased, which was unusual.

"We've got something," he said. "Not much, but something. We've found the cabby who drove a man and a small boy up to the Bronx that night. The boy seemed all right. The driver thought he'd been crying at first, but he cheered up. He let them out on Fordham Road, near the Botanical Gardens."

"Any description of the man?"

"Might possibly be Hellinger, from what we've got. Medium size, which lets you out. The driver picked them up about four a.m. on Lexington Avenue. Was on his way home or he wouldn't have taken them. He lives up there."

"Four o'clock! Where was the boy all that time?"

"What do you expect? The kid saw something, so he had to be got rid of, for a time."

"Or for good," Forsythe said bitterly. "You'd better know this. The money's gone. Either it never went to the bank or it's there under another name."

But Close was a Homicide man. He dismissed the matter of Anne's savings with what amounted to a shrug. Something, however, was amusing him.

"That's a nice sister you have," he said, with apparent irrelevance. "Fond of you, isn't she?"

"Don't go cryptic on me," Forsythe said shortly, but Close laughed.

"I never went to college, son," he said. "Just plain English is all I know. But you'll be glad to know your sister didn't do so well with that piece of wire. It got caught on an old piling, and the river police got it for us."

"So we've got the river police now, have we?"

"You ought to be thankful we have," Close said dryly. "It rather lets you out, unless you've got a bale of it cached away somewhere."

Forsythe sat back at his desk and thought desperately. Some things were clear enough. Anne's threat to make a will, with the necessary identification at the bank, had made the situation impossible for Martha Simmons, since discovery would be inevitable. But it was clear she had not been working alone.

Whatever the money had been, it looked to him as though she had withdrawn it, probably in cash, and locked it in her safe. Then, when she was preparing to escape with it, her accomplice had killed her.

With a sense of futility he telephoned the bank again, asking for a list of its bookkeepers. None of the names was familiar, however. There were about a dozen of them, and except for two—one in a hospital and the other vacationing in Florida after the flu—they were all present and working.

He worked frantically the rest of the afternoon. His calendar showed him only a few days until what he called the "Ides of March." With the red-bound book beside him, he worked on "spin-off" reorganisation, on capital gains and losses—new amendment—and so on until his head ached and his very soul rebelled.

At six o'clock he went back to the hospital. He dreaded meeting Anne's eyes and what he had to tell her. Not only about her son. She had to know about the fund she had been so carefully saving for him. One or two things, however, he must try to learn. Had Martha talked about herself at all, for instance, or mentioned the name of the man whom Mrs. Hicks referred to as her "gentleman friend"?

Anne was sitting up in bed when he arrived. He was glad to see that the guard had been removed from her door, but she was showing strain and the nurse warned him not to excite her. Her first words were about the boy.

"Have they found him?" she asked eagerly.

"They've traced him to the neighborhood of the Botanical Gardens. That narrows the search. They'll find him, my dear. Don't worry. About eighteen thousand cops are on the job. Not to mention the State police."

"The Botanical Gardens!" she gasped. "He could never go there alone!"

"I'm afraid he didn't, Anne. We think someone took him and is hiding him. You have

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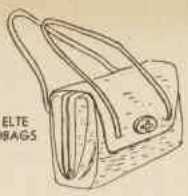
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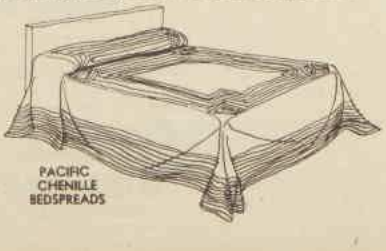
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Continuing . . . The Frightened Wife

from page 65

to know, my dear. It must have been someone he knew, for apparently he went willingly. How long had he been in Connecticut?"

"Only a couple of months."

"And before that? Who did he know?"

She was trying to be calm, but he hated seeing the look in her eyes.

"I don't know," she said vaguely. "Just children, mostly. I kept him with me as much as I could, but I did let him out to play on the pavement now and then."

"And in the building?"

"He liked Mike Hellinger. The couple on the first floor both work. He seldom saw them, and the man above us—his name's Jamison, I think—hadn't been there long. He never saw Billy."

It was Hellinger, of course. The lad would have gone with Hellinger. A scared little boy, not really knowing what had happened. Running desperately down the stairs, finding the superintendent there and going into his arms. He got up and went to the window, away from Anne's tragic face.

Close had said Hellinger was smart, a cut above his job. He was muscular, too, strong, and able to strangle a woman like Martha Simmons. Yet the puzzle still remained. Could he have forged the bank-deposit receipts? Had he in his drifting career since the war once worked at the Gotham Trust? But even then—

He went back to Anne and smiled down at her. "Try to trust us all, darling," he said. "The boy's all right. I'm sure of it. Why not? He's no danger to anyone."

"He could have seen who fired those shots."

"You said he was in his own room. Remember? He was probably just scared, poor kid, and ran out."

She took little comfort from that, he thought. On the other subject — Martha Simmons' affairs—however, he drew a complete blank.

"She never talked about herself," she said. "I'm afraid she'll be worrying about the programme, you know."

He straightened and looked down at her, making an effort to smile.

"I've seen her, Anne. She's—not worrying."

He left her then. He was a poor actor, and he knew it. He hated lying to her, even by indirection. But he was perfectly aware, as he hunted for a telephone downstairs in the hospital, that he had left something of himself behind in her small room above. And that the something was what was euphemistically called his heart.

He could not locate Close, and his first impulse was to go to the big dirty building in Centre Street, with its pigeons strutting outside and its dusty halls within. But time was important.

If Hellinger had taken the boy the whole aspect of the case changed. He would have done so only if the boy had seen him with the gun, and if he had he was not only in danger, he might already be beyond help.

That it was at least possible was borne out by the situation when he reached the apartment house. Repeated ringing brought no response until Mrs. Kerr came in from the street, fumbling in her bag for a key. She smiled at him pleasantly.

"Nobody in, I'm afraid," she said. "Not even Mike."

"He's the one I wanted to see."

She laughed. "My husband and I would like to, too," she said. "Mike always took his job pretty lightly, but now he's disappeared entirely. My husband's been keeping up the furnace or we'd have frozen."

"How long since Mike left?"

"Well, we've had a dripping faucet for the past week, but he only really vamoosed yesterday. We've taken about all we can. I'm looking for another apartment. So's the third floor, I believe. You need service in an old building like this. Anyhow, the place is ghastly. I want to get out."

Forsythe hesitated. If Hellinger had hidden the boy, there might be some sign of it in his rooms. He needed badly to see them.

"There's not much use waiting for him, then," he said. "Perhaps if I could leave him a note—"

She smiled again. "I don't think it will do much good," she said, "but he has a couple of rooms in the basement. Down the stairs there. I don't think he locks them. Nothing valuable, I imagine."

But they were locked. Forsythe groped his way down in the dark, and, striking a match to discover a light-switch, found himself in a long, bare hall, with the furnace room and coal bin towards the street, and Hellinger's quarters behind them.

He tried the doors without result. They were sturdy enough to resist any pressure he exerted, and at last he hauled off and gave one of them a resounding kick. Nothing happened, except that a male voice from the hall above called down.

"Is that you, Mike?" it said sharply.

"I'm sorry." Forsythe felt embarrassed and uncomfortable. "I knocked over something. He's not here."

"Well, he'd better get here and attend to the furnace," said the angry voice. "This place is like an icehouse." The speaker came down the stairs and stopped, peering at him nearsightedly. It was Jamison.

"Why, it's Mr. Wade, isn't it?" he said. "I'm afraid Hellinger's out. He often is. Anything I can do for you?"

Forsythe thought fast. "Mrs. Collier wants some things to use in the hospital. I need to get into her apartment."

"Too bad. I'm afraid I can't help you there. Care to have a drink with me?"

"Thanks. I need to get home and clean up. Been out all day. Got over your fall on the stairs?"

"Practically. I'm still very lame. That was a trap, Mr. Wade," he said sombrely. "And I have reason to believe it was meant for me."

He did not explain, and limped back to the stairs again. Forsythe was thoughtful. Just why did Jamison think someone wanted to kill him? It seemed unlikely. He impressed Forsythe as a harmless little man, and he promptly forgot him in what followed.

Yet it was not so much, merely a kitchen chair in the front cellar. It was a curious place for a chair, however. It was not in the furnace room, where a man might conceivably sit down to rest. It was beside the coal bin, and Forsythe stood staring down at it.

Had the boy been hidden here the night of the murder, until the police had gone? He had been somewhere until four in the morning. And the chair had not been there long. It was dusty, but not from the coal. Forsythe was convinced Hellinger had kept the boy here, either warned not to move or possibly gagged and tied.

A six-year-old youngster in a place like this! So sure was he that if he had laid his hands on Hellinger at that moment he would have killed him.

As he was going out, he met Joe Kerr at the front door. Kerr gave one look at his stormy face and would have passed him, but Forsythe caught him by the arm.

"Just a minute," he said. "I want to ask you something. The night Collier was shot, did you hear a child crying?"

"A child?"

"That's what I said."

"How could we hear anything, with the police all over the place?"

Forsythe's furious anger was slowly cooling. Kerr's detached attitude, however, annoyed him.

"I wonder," he said. "Those floors are thin. How was it you and your wife didn't hear those shots, Kerr?"

"I've told the police. If we heard anything, it probably would have sounded like a backfire. But we were asleep. Not," he added, "that I think it's any of your business."

He left Forsythe and put his key into the door of his apartment. Over his shoulder he said, "A lot of cars backfire around here. It's hard to tell the difference."

"They don't backfire over your head, do they?"

Kerr, however, did not deign to answer. He opened the door and slammed it behind him.

Forsythe stopped at a telephone on his way home and called Close.

"I think I've found where Billy Collier was hidden until four that morning," he said. "In the coal cellar of the apartment, probably tied to a chair."

Close had been yawning, but he was instantly awake, exclaiming, "So it was Mike Hellinger after all!"

"I think Hellinger took the boy, yes," Forsythe said. "But what about the rest of it? If he forged those bank-deposit receipts I'll eat them."

"Forget them," Close said, sounding cross. "He's our man, and I'll bet we'll find some of that wire around the place when we search it. Used it for repairs probably."

"You've got young Kerr in the building. He works in a bank. Ever thought of him?"

"What's wrong with you?" Close was definitely angry. "We've got our killer, hands down, or we will get him. Wait a minute. The other phone's ringing. Hold on."

It was not easy. A stout woman laden with bundles kept rapping on the door of the telephone booth. Also Forsythe began to run out of small change. He was fishing desperately for another coin when Close came back on the wire.

"Sorry," he said. "Only the Commissioner's raising the roof as usual. I'll tell you this much, Forsythe; one of our fellows in the Bronx thinks he saw Hellinger in the street here this morning. He followed him for a while, but he got wise and our man lost him. Don't worry. We'll get him yet. We've covered the airports, the bus stations, and the railroads. State police are watching the roads, too. But if he saw our man he'll try to escape. Probably tonight."

"Taking the boy with him?"

"Why would he? The whole country's watching for the kid. We went over those rooms after the report came in, Forsythe. He's packed to go, and get this: He has five thousand dollars in new bills in a cigar box hidden on a rafter in the furnace room. Better go home and get a good night's sleep, fellah. This is our business. We're all set to grab him; and don't believe we won't."

Forsythe hung up, letting the stout woman pass him. "And about time," she said grumpily. But he did not go home. Instead he got a cup of coffee at a nearby restaurant and tried to work out the puzzle.

He had a strong sense of the impending tragedy as he sat there. With Hellinger ready to escape, what about the boy? He couldn't mean to take him with him. Was he already safely out of the way in some forgotten corner of the Botanical Gardens? The very thought turned him cold.

He knew he was not at his best. He had had an exhausting twenty-four hours. He had, in effect, been accused of murder, he had had very little sleep and practically no food, and he realised that the full extent of the story depended on a thread so thin as to be almost non-existent.

Somewhere the picture was wrong. Why had Hellinger held the boy—if he had held him—for almost a week before trying to escape?

As far as Forsythe could see, no one had been in any hurry to escape. It was as though what was over was over, and why not take it easy? It was ridiculous, preposterous, on any other theory than that something was not finished. Was it possible part of Anne's money was still missing, had not been in Martha's safe after all?

It was a thin thread on which to hang a case, but it was all he had. What about the locked bags in her room that Mrs. Hicks had mentioned? Had anyone tried to get at them? Was Hellinger the anonymous lover Mrs. Hicks had never seen? It was possible, he thought. He would have been attractive to women. But even if he was, he did not believe Mrs. Hicks would turn the bags over to him easily, without some positive indentification.

He got up wearily and took a taxi to Washington Square, where he found Mrs. Hicks at home and in a state of suppressed excitement. As before, her "ladies" were in the parlor, and somewhat unwillingly she led him back to the dining-room.

"The paper says you found her," she said not too pleasantly. "But if you want to talk about her, I've told the police all I know. It's bad for my business, Mr. Forsythe, having cops in and out all day, going over her room, opening her bags and everything. And to make things worse, an attempt

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Continuing The Frightened Wife

at burglary last night! I don't know what the world's coming to."

"Someone tried to break in?"

"Someone got in," she said. "He was on the stairs when one of my ladies got up to—to go to the bathroom. She screamed and he ran. Believe me, I sat up the rest of the night with all lights on and my dead husband's gun in my hand."

He had been right so far, Forsythe considered. The money had not all been in the safe. Martha Simmons had not trusted her accomplice and had tried to protect herself. But the police had opened the bags. If the money had been in them—

"What did they find in her luggage?" he asked. "Anything important?"

"Nothing but her clothes. I stood over them while they did it, Mr. Forsythe. I didn't like the idea. Her poor bits and pieces, and their big clumsy hands! And her crying the way she did before she left on Sunday morning."

"Why was she crying? Did she say?"

"Just that she was worried about something, and to forget it."

"And that's all she left- Just the suitcase?"

Mrs. Hicks hesitated. "Well, no," she admitted. "Before she went she gave me her dressing case to keep for her. I didn't show it to them, I didn't see they had any business with her brushes and combs, and maybe a nightgown and fresh underwear. It was hardly decent."

Forsythe drew a long breath. "I see," he said. "It would be a good idea to keep it locked away somewhere, Mrs. Hicks. I have a feeling it will help solve her murder. And it's just possible your burglar may come back for it."

"Let him try," she said firmly. "Just let him try."

As he got up to leave, however, she remembered something.

"There was a small snapshot of her and some man," she said. "I found it when I was straightening her room after the police left. It was on the floor under the edge of her rug. I suppose it's her friend. Maybe you'd like to see it."

"Thank you, I would," Forsythe said without expression, and lit a cigarette with unsteady hands when she left the room. If this was the break in the case it might explain everything — his own apparently unfounded suspicions of the past few hours, the boy's kidnapping, and Hellinger's strange and almost purposeless activities.

It was the break. When she returned, he stared at it with complete unbelief, and, without so much as a good-bye to the astonished landlady, rushed out of the house. He was still running when he hit the pavement, and no cab in sight, kept right on until he picked one up a few blocks farther on Fifth Avenue.

He had left his hat, and the driver looked at him suspiciously as he jerked the door open and climbed in.

"What's the rush?" he said. "Police after you?"

"No, but it's ten dollars if you drive like mad to Lexington and Fifty-Fourth Street."

The driver let in the clutch with a jerk, but he was still obviously curious.

Forsythe leaned forward and changed the order. "Stop first at my house on Thirty-Sixth Street. I have got to get something there."

"The ten still stands?"

"Here it is."

He passed over the money and sat back, deep in thought. It was seven o'clock, and at almost any time now Hellinger might try for his money and his luggage. In that case—

It had commenced to snow, a thin March snow which lay on the streets only briefly and then melted. The cab skidded here and there, but he paid no attention to it. At his own house, however, when he reached it, he had a bit of luck. Both Margery and Eliza were in the basement dining-room. At least they and Tillie were out of the way. Only Thomas Carlyle was in the hall, making a mute appeal to be let out.

His gun was where he kept it. It was a heavy one, a .45, and it sagged his overcoat pocket. Fortunately, the cabby did not notice it.

Soon the cab had to leave First Avenue for Lexington. "Can't do so good here," the driver said. "Too much light."

"Do the best you can," Forsythe said impatiently. "If a cop tries to stop you, go on. I'll fix it for you later."

"Sez you!" the man grumbled, but they made good time, and Forsythe stopped the cab a block from the apartment house, leaving the cabby staring after him.

Forsythe realised suddenly, as he walked on, that he had no way of entering the place. The Kerrs' windows were dark, which relieved him somewhat, and he moved on to the service entrance at the side. This was a narrow alleyway leading back to the rear of the building, and he turned in and walked back, ignorant of the fact that a young sergeant in a doorway across the street with a walkie-talkie hung from his

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shoulder had pushed up his six-foot aerial and was speaking softly.

"Man just went in service alley," he said. "Heavy coat, no hat. May be fellow you're after."

A squad car which had been standing around the corner slowly moved up and stopped, but there was no other activity. Forsythe had reached the rear door by that time. To his surprise, it was unlocked, and he stepped in cautiously, his hand on his gun.

At the head of the back stairs to the basement he stood for a moment, listening. There were muffled sounds from below, the dragging of what might have been a heavy suitcase along the floor, and once the striking of a match, as though someone had lit a cigarette.

Evidently Hellinger had beaten him to it.

Forsythe looked around him. The bare hall was empty, but there was a door under the stairs, and he opened it cautiously.

It was the usual space allotted for a baby carriage or two, or a boy's bicycle. All it contained now, however, was a small, probably outgrown tricycle, and careful not to touch it, Forsythe slid inside. He left the door open an inch or two, and waited, his gun in his hand.

Nothing happened. Below, he heard Hellinger snap off a light and begin slowly and with extreme caution to climb the stairs. There was no other sound whatever. Hellinger was at the top now, and Forsythe could see him. In the dim light he was little more than a shadow. Then, with no warning whatever, a shot was fired from the front of the hall, followed by two others, and Hellinger dropped where he stood.

Forsythe came out of his hiding-place shooting, or so he remembered it later. He fired four times, while, outside, men converged on the building from every direction, and someone threw open the front door. All at once the hall was crowded, and Forsythe, gun in hand, was aware of Close staring down at the man lying just inside, and from there to Forsythe. His voice was frozen.

"So it was you after all!" he said. "Don't move if you want to live."

"Don't be more of a fool than you can help," Forsythe said. "He just killed Mike Hellinger. The killer's back there, if you care to look. And there went your chance for finding Billy Collier. A lot of good you've been tonight."

All at once he felt dizzy. He sat down on the bottom stair and tried to light a cigarette.

"Hellinger fooled you," he said. "He's been hiding out here ever since he was spotted this morning. In the Collier apartment, probably."

Close stared at him, but he made no comment, and Forsythe only roused again when he heard him order an ambulance as well as the morgue car. He looked up and Close gave him a sickly grin.

"You didn't shoot so well," he added. "Fellow here's still alive."

Strangely, it was only ten o'clock when Forsythe found himself in a small room at the local precinct stationhouse, with Close behind a desk and a sergeant taking shorthand notes at a table. Close was still not too friendly. He looked rather as though he had been flying a kite, only to have the string jerked out of his hands.

"All right," he said gruffly. "Let's have it, Forsythe. What did you know, and how did you know it?"

"I didn't actually know anything until tonight," Forsythe said slowly, "when Martha Simmons' landlady showed me a picture. Then I knew who her accomplice was. But from the start I'd seen those bank-deposit receipts. You hadn't. They were genuine as far as they went, but Anne's money was gone just the same. That meant a bank connection, and it let Hellinger out.

"I think the stealing had been going on ever since the radio programme was a hit, but two things happened to scare them. One was Collier's suspicion, beginning maybe a month ago. The other was Anne's intention of making a will. Just when Collier's gun was stolen I don't know, but it was meant to be used in case of emergency, and it was. Only Anne wasn't killed. That was a blow.

"The other of course was the boy. It convinced me Collier was murdered by someone in the building. If not, if the boy saw someone and was in danger, why not shoot him too? Or take him along, dump him into the river, get rid of him somehow? But the way I saw it, the murderer was still in the building when he heard the boy crying and running down to Hellinger.

"Up to that time, nobody knew he was there, but he'd spilled the beans pretty badly. Maybe he saw the killer, maybe he didn't. But he's got to be put out of the way, for a time anyhow, and Hellinger was no fool. To him, Collier was no good, as well dead as

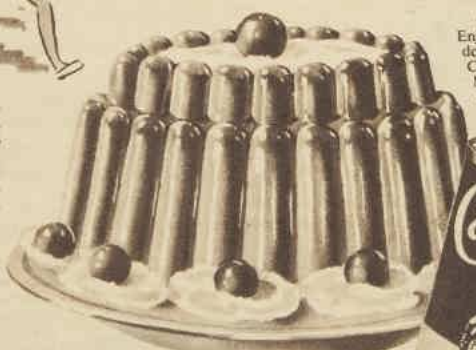
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Over holidays and in hot weather, you'll never be short of milk with Carnation in the kitchen. Going picnicking or camping? No worry over milk supplies with Carnation along! But that's only half the story! With double-rich Carnation Milk . . . so rich it whips . . . you can toss up luscious Summer Sweets in minutes only . . . make the smoothest, creamiest mayonnaise, too. Carnation Milk is in convenient liquid form. For all milk purposes, dilute with an equal quantity of water. When cream is wanted, use Carnation "straight" —it's wonderful on fresh or stewed fruit!

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Enjoy a carefree day outdoors, knowing this delicious CARNATION JELLY MOULD is ready to delight your home-coming family! (Recipe in Cook's Corner).



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1 pkt. Jelly crystals, ½ tin Carnation Milk, 1 cup boiling water.
Dissolve jelly in boiling water, allow to cool but not set. Chill Carnation in refrigerator freezing tray or on ice. Whip until thick, add dissolved jelly and mix, then set in refrigerator or ice-chest.

CARNATION SALAD DRESSING

This smooth, tangy dressing is easy on the cook (and the budget!)



3 tablespoons Carnation Milk, ½ teaspoon mustard, 1 tablespoon vinegar, pinch salt, 1 teaspoon sugar. Mix all ingredients together until smooth. Can be made in quantity and used as needed.

CARNATION MAYONNAISE

Thick and creamy—make it with or without salad oil, as you prefer.
Put the following ingredients in a pint jar, in the order listed. Fasten lid on tightly, then shake vigorously for two minutes.
¼ cup vinegar or lemon juice, ¼ cup salad oil or melted butter, ¼ cup Carnation Milk, 3 teaspoons sugar, 1 egg yolk (unbeaten), ½ teaspoon salt, few grains cayenne, 1 teaspoon dry mustard.
Keep in a cool place, but not the refrigerator.



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not, and five thousand dollars was a lot of money. So he hid the boy in the cellar before he called the police.

"I'd got that far up to tonight, when the whole setup began to seem queer to me. So far as I could see, nobody except Hellinger was trying to escape, and I didn't think he was smart enough to fake those receipts. Outside of him, everybody was sitting pretty. It looked as though whoever killed Collier and shot Anne was waiting for something, and I could only guess that all the money hadn't been in Martha's safe the night she was killed.

"I knew this—she'd been planning to go away. She was all packed by Sunday when she left the house. We'll probably never know where she spent most of that day. Personally I think she was trying to find out what happened to the boy. She had known him since he was a baby. Very likely she was fond of him. The landlady said she was crying that morning when she left."

"If she did find out, it might have been one reason she was killed," Close suggested. He was less gruff now, his eyes alert and interested.

"That and the money," Forsythe agreed. "She was a bad actor, but Collier's murder and the attempt on Anne must have been terrific blows. She hadn't counted on any killing. Then the kidnapping of the boy. . . ."

"She didn't know that when she followed you to Danbury."

"I'm not sure she did follow me. I think she wanted to see Eliza Warrington. To find out if she knew about Anne's radio programme. If she didn't, with Anne badly hurt, she was still safe until she could get away."

"What about you? You knew."

"Maybe I was next on the list," Forsythe said grimly. "Anyhow she had no chance to talk to Eliza, and she saw her leave the house alone with me. So where was the boy? Very likely she asked the neighbors, and they told her his father had taken him several days ago.

"Well, there it was. Nobody had killed the boy, at least the night Collier was killed. I was pretty sure he'd been hidden in the coal cellar until Hellinger could get him away. That meant there were three men in the building who might be involved. Kerr, Jamison, and Hellinger. Kerr worked in a bank, but not the Gotham Trust. Of the lot, Jamison could hardly have put the wire on the stairs, since he fell over it himself and was pretty badly knocked out. That left Kerr and Hellinger, and I didn't believe Hellinger was smart enough. So there I was, until I found the snapshot tonight. Then I knew."

.

It was after midnight when Forsythe got home. Close drove him there on his way to Centre Street, and rather to his surprise accepted his offer of a drink. He had been visibly more cheerful since he received a telephone call an hour or so before. Now he seemed amused.

To Forsythe's surprise, a wide-eyed and smiling Tillie opened the door to them, and he saw Margery beckoning from the top of the stairs.

Both men went up and she led them to the guest room Eliza was occupying. It was brightly lit, and sitting in the centre of the bed, with a resentful Thomas Carlyle in his arms, was a freshly scrubbed and smiling boy. Forsythe stared.

"Who found him?" he said hoarsely.

"Apparently he found himself," Close said. "Walked up to a cop near the Bronx River Parkway and said he was lost and wanted to go home. Only the address he gave was in Manhattan, which didn't check with where he was found. The cop was going off duty, so he took the kid home and fed him. I guess his wife cleaned him up."

Billy laughed. "I got awful dirty getting out the window," he said. "That cop was nice. I liked him."

"Right-o, son," Close said, grinning. "Only I'll have a few words to say to your friend some day. It took his wife and a washcloth to identify you. Better let that cat go. I think he has other things on his mind."

Billy relinquished Thomas Carlyle, who shot out of the room, and Forsythe dropped heavily into a chair. He saw Eliza then. She had been on her knees beside the bed, as though she had been praying. He rather thought she had.

"I got tired in that room," Billy said. "I waited and waited, and Mike didn't come back. So I climbed out the window onto a shed. I tore my pants," he added regretfully. "My best pants too."

Forsythe looked around the room at Close, now cheerful and a bit smug, at Eliza's dedicated face, and Margery's happy one. It seemed impossible to have come from injury and violent death to this quiet room.

"Was Mike good to you?" he asked.

"Yes. He's not much of a cook," said Billy judicially, "but he got my pyjamas for me, and a clean shirt."

So that was why the man had been in the boy's room the day Forsythe found him there. To smooth up the turned-down bed too. Bit by bit the story was becoming clear. And then he thought of Anne.

"His mother?" he asked Close. "Does she know?"

"Doctor said better wait until morning. He'd given her a sedative by the time young Bill was brought in."

Only later, over a hasty drink before Close left to make his final report on the case, did Forsythe learn any further details.

So far as they had been able to find out, the boy had not seen who did the shooting. All he remembered was the noise, and seeing a gun thrown into the room. He was frightened to move at once. Then he ran downstairs to Hellinger, and Hellinger put him in his bed before he called the police.

"Just when he was bribed to hide him we'll probably never know," Close said. "Hellinger wasn't all bad, but he was a realist. Only as time went on he knew he'd got a tiger by the tail and couldn't let go. When the boy escaped, he knew the game was up. He came back to get his bags and his money—and a bullet in his head."

He yawned as he got up to go.

"Even for me, it's been a long evening," he said. "There used to be a sign in the old saloons: 'Take a dozen fried oysters home to your wife.' Only my wife doesn't like oysters."

.

After a long strain, the human body either breaks or sets about to make its own repairs. So it was that Forsythe slept that night, slept without ever dreaming. When he wakened early his head was clear, and he lay still for some time, thinking about Anne Collier.

He was roused by the opening of his door, and a small figure in pyjamas which came over and stood by his bed.

"I hope I didn't wake you," Billy said politely. "Nobody else is up yet."

"Of course not. How did you sleep?"

"I always sleep. Mike says I'm the best sleeper he ever knew."

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Continuing The Frightened Wife

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Forsythe stirred uneasily, thinking of the big body lying motionless in the hall the night before.

"Why don't you get into bed here?" he said. "The room's pretty cold. I'll move over."

.

It was ten o'clock that morning before Forsythe reached the hospital, and Anne already had been told. He found her with the head of her bed raised, and sheer happiness written all over her. Her eyes were shining, and she held out her one useful hand to him.

"I don't know what to say or how to thank you," she said. "The police say you never gave up."

"Billy found himself, Anne. He's—he's a fine boy. He came into my room this morning and got into my bed. It was the most flattering thing ever happened to me."

"He must have liked you. He wouldn't do that with everybody."

But the unspoken question was still between them. She looked at him searchingly.

"Why did it happen, Wade?" she asked. "Why on earth would Mike steal him? I've been lying here trying to understand. All they told me this morning was that he was back, and at your house."

"Why not let it wait until you're stronger, my dear? It's a long story. I can tell you this: Mike never meant to hurt Billy. He was being kept out of the way for fear he had seen who shot you."

"And who did that?" she asked. "I'm not a child, Wade. I'm entitled to know."

ANNE was right, Forsythe realised. Sooner or later she would have to know, so, still holding her hand, he told her—of the plot about her money, of the faked bank-deposit receipts in Martha's files, of his discovery at the bank that she had no money there, and the threat to the conspirators of her making a will.

"Remember," he said, "we were to go to the Gotham Trust and transfer the account to your own name. It would have blown things wide open."

Her eyes were wide with astonishment. "I trusted Martha," she said "It's hard to believe she would do a thing like that. Maybe she can explain it. I hope so."

He could not tell her Martha Simmons was dead. She had endured too much.

"I don't think she can, my dear," he said quietly. "Apparently she and the man who worked with her split about even. The police found sixty-five thousand dollars in new bank money in her dressing-case, and the rest was recovered tonight in a locked suitcase. It all belongs to you now—you and Billy."

She brushed the money aside as though it was of no importance.

"But who was the man?" she insisted. "Don't you want to tell me? Or do you know?"

He would have told her. She could have taken it, he knew. Her eyes were brave and steady. But at that moment Close rapped on the door and came in. A new Close, carefully shaved and dressed, and mildly triumphant. He smiled when he saw Forsythe.

"Someday," he said, "when you're an old married man, try a bottle of perfume instead of fried oysters. It works like a charm. But maybe you like fried oysters, Mrs. Collier."

Anne blushed. "I do," she said valiantly. "You look as though you're off for a holiday."

"I'd hardly call it that." Close grinned again. "I'm on my way to be kissed by the commissioner. I hope he shaved this morning." He glanced at the roses. "I see you got ahead of me, Forsythe."

Forsythe looked guilty. "I wish I'd thought of them," he said. "They're not mine."

Anne smiled at them. Happiness had made her very lovely.

"I'm sure you've both been too busy," she said. "These came yesterday from that nice Mr. Jamison who lives above us. Such a kind card too. He wants to see me when I'm ready to have visitors."

To her complete surprise, Close went abruptly to the table and jerked up the vase. His face was flushed with anger.

"So he hopes to see you again!" he said furiously. "So he could put another piece of wire on the stairs to make you fall and break your neck, and when you didn't, he could pretend to fall over it himself! So he could kill Fred Collier and try to kill you? So he could plot to rob you, and have your boy kidnapped? So he could strangle Martha Simmons, who had worked and plotted with him, and tonight kill that poor fool, Mike Hellinger! That's your nice kind Mr. Jamison. Only that's not his name."

He glanced at Forsythe.

"He's the fellow the commissioner ought to kiss," he said. "Not me. Only he's a rotten shot. The fellow's going to live to go to the chair."

"Mr. Jamison!" Anne said faintly. "But we hardly knew him. Why should he do all that?"

"Money," Close said with disgust. "Your money. Let Forsythe tell you the story. I'm taking those roses out in the hall to tear them to bits." He went towards the door and stopped.

"That was a good guess of yours last night, Forsythe," he said. "At two o'clock this morning the boys hauled a man named Stone out of his bed, and over roars of fury took him to look at Jamison. He's their absent bookkeeper all right. Name of Jenkins, and supposed to be in Florida. Last I heard of him, Stone was on his knees before a crowd of reporters, begging them to respect the sacred name of the Gotham Trust."

He went out then, flowers and all, and Forsythe watched Anne anxiously. She had lain back on her pillows, but her eyes were still clear.

"He seemed such a harmless little man," she said. "And he sent me roses! It's hard to believe."

"Try not to think too much about it," Forsythe said worriedly. "You have Billy and if it means anything, darling, you have me."

She smiled up into his anxious face. "It means everything," she said. "And—I know I'm not the commissioner, but if you don't mind—"

"Mind!" he said. He bent down to her, and Close, receiving a stiff and formal accolade from his superior officer, would certainly have approved and probably envied what followed.

"You've done a very fine job, lieutenant," the commissioner said, when the formalities were over. "As I said before, the department is proud of you, Close."

"I had some help, sir. I want you to know that. Without Wade Forsythe I might have been patrolling Staten Island."

"Forsythe? Who is he? One of our fellows?"

"No sir. He's a lawyer. As a matter of fact, he specialises in taxes." Which left the commissioner practically speechless.

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Continuing Here's Your Hat

from page 10

ently he shut the door on himself, next appearing clad in shorts and tennis shoes. He drew a pan of water from the hose and, seating himself at the umbrella table, began to shave. At that point Kate stopped into the patio and regarded him coldly.

"What's the big idea?"

Mr. Ames completed the delicate stroking of his upper lip before he replied.

"I have decided," he advised her, "to wait and let Mr. Dalrymple handle this situation himself. He has a business engagement in the city next Monday and he told me before I left the office yesterday that he would be driving south on Sunday and would stop in here on his way down."

"I hope you don't expect to stay in that broom cupboard out there until Sunday!" Kate exclaimed.

"I certainly do," said Mr. Ames. He rinsed his razor and started wiping his face.

"Well, you're certainly not going to!" she cried. "You're going to pack your things and get out right now!"

Mr. Ames gazed up at her. "Suppose I don't?" he said. "Will you use force?" He began to laugh. Still laughing, he picked up his shaving things and took them back to his room. He emerged a moment later carrying a fishing-rod.

"Oh, you cur!" Kate said. "How proud you must be of yourself! Picking on children, bullying women. And how dare you call our poor, defenceless old Poochie 'demented'!"

"Tut, tut," Mr. Ames said negligently. He started for the gate. Just as he reached it, however, she threw a flower pot.

The pot shattered against the wall of the garage, sprinkling Mr. Ames with geranium leaves and damp earth. He turned and for a minute they stood eyeing each other with perfect loathing. Then Mr. Ames bared his teeth in a terrible smile and went through the gate.

Kate finished the little Indian boy about noon and sprayed fixative on him, then took a bath and put on shorts and a shirt. By now, she thought, the children should be dashing in from the beach, screaming for food.

She went out into the patio and listened for them and almost instantly became aware of a wailing, human sound.

Though there was no one visible on the beach, outraged cries of anguish guided her unerringly to a point among the rolling dunes. Arriving breathlessly at the top of one of them, she looked down to see Mr. Ames seated in the sand with little Peter wrigging on his knees.

"You had enough?" Mr. Ames asked Peter.

"Yes," Peter said.

"All right," Mr. Ames told him. "Now stop that bellowing."

Larry looked up and saw her. "Wow!" he said. "Peter really copped it!"

Peter began to bellow again. "Mama!" he shrieked.

Kate was trembling. Had there been a rock, a weapon of any kind, handy, she would have attacked Mr. Ames.

"Come here!" she told the children hoarsely, and when they came up to her she took little Peter's hand and turned blindly back towards the house. From the dunes behind her someone laughed.

After lunch she kept the children indoors, and took them with her when she went shopping for groceries later that afternoon. After dinner, when they had got into their pyjamas, she explained that there were some people in the world who simply didn't like children.

"Honest?" Peter said incredulously.

She nodded. They must, she said, learn to avoid such people, particularly Mr. Ames.

"Oh," Peter told her reassuringly, "he doesn't spank so hard."

"You yelled loud enough," Bridget said. "I wouldn't yell at all if he spanked me."

"You shouldn't've run off with his fish-hook," Larry told Peter reprovingly.

"All right," Kate said. "That's enough about him!" She read them a chapter out of Dr. Doolittle and tucked them in bed.

There were dishes to wash and some odds and ends of laundry, then she sat down a minute to smoke a cigarette before starting work on a picture of the little Indian boy's father.

This part of the evening was always rather a bad time for her, but tonight it was much worse. Now it seemed the whole world was ranged against her and her little family.

Now all her splendid defiance of that morning was gone and she just felt lonely and friendless and unequal to her job. Perhaps her children were a bit too uninhibited, and maybe Poochie was, too. She really ought to discipline them more, she knew. But it was so difficult . . . all alone . . . with never anyone to help . . .

Presently a tear appeared, then another, and as she sat on the pretty sofa and smoked her cigarette they rolled slowly down her cheeks.

The morning was so beautiful it almost hurt, particularly when she recalled that it was Saturday, and, with the ogreish Mr. Dalrymple due to arrive on the morrow, she knew it would probably be their last day to enjoy his fine little house. After all, what could she and poor, quixotic Mr. Beggs do against a large and powerful firm of child-haters?

She let the children go to the beach right after breakfast. Later, as she stepped into the sunlit patio with the garbage can, Mr. Ames was just emerging from his cubbyhole.

He was dressed in slacks and a quite unlegal-looking sports shirt, and when he saw her he bowed deeply. "Beautiful day!" he exclaimed. He gazed upon her. "Gorgeous . . ." he added.

Tentatively, Kate picked up a flower pot. Then she thought, Oh, what's the use?, and put it back.

Grinning diabolically, Mr. Ames passed unchallenged through the gate.

She concentrated all morning on her painting. At midday Poochie and the children returned briefly for food. A bit later Mr. Ames came back from town. He took some things into his room, changed to shorts, then he, too, went beachward.

The sun was a red ball on the horizon when they all came trudging back. The children filed in, followed by Poochie, who flopped down exhausted.

Kate fed the children some soup, smeared cream on their sunburned faces, and tucked them into their respective beds. In the dusk outside Mr. Ames sang far off-key as he took a shower with the patio hose.

"Did he spank any of you today?" Kate asked Larry.

"No, ma'am," Larry said.

Kate started. "What did you say?"

"I said, 'No, ma'am'," Larry explained. "That's polite."

"That's what I thought," Kate said shakily. She couldn't remember when she'd been quite so touched. She gave Larry a kiss.

Came the dawn and the three doors on the balcony swung open and three heads appeared. Silently then the little O'Learys crept downstairs. They crossed the living-room to the kitchen and let themselves out the patio door.

A moment later Mr. Ames awakened to a soft tapping on his window. He sat up at once and, pulling a pair of pants on over his pyjamas, opened his door. He stretched for a moment, then gazed sternly down at the assembled O'Learys.

"What's the password?" he demanded softly.

"Shhh!" they replied.

"Right!" Mr. Ames led them back into the house.

For some time thereafter there was a variety of stealthy sounds: a sound like moths' wings as dust cloths were applied, subdued sounds of sweeping, of mopping, of dishes carefully handled, of water gently run. The patio was swept and rubbish picked up from the front yard.

"All right," Mr. Ames said then. "Now get dressed. And—remember—really scrub those faces!"

While they went back into the house to do his bidding, Mr. Ames quickly shaved and got cleaned up himself. A few minutes later he found three shining little O'Learys lined up for inspection in the patio.

Mr. Ames, though he inspected them thoroughly, could find nothing wrong, not even when he peered behind their ears.

"Okay," he said. "Now, don't forget anything. Remember how we practised it yesterday afternoon." He paused. Then they all heard the sound of a car.

Larry ran over to the gate. "It's a big green job!" he reported.

"That's it," Mr. Ames said, sprinting for his room. "Get Poochie!"

Poochie almost knocked him down when she saw the bone he was unwrapping, and, after he had shut her in his room with it, there was just time for everyone to get back into the house.

Mr. Ames opened the front door as soon as the bell tinkled. On the threshold he found his senior partner, Mr. Leon Dalrymple, a small, unmistakably lawyerish person with iron-grey hair and a moustache that sometimes twitched.

"Ha," Mr. Dalrymple said, "I expected to find you still in bed."

"Oh, no, indeed, sir," Ames said heartily. "Come right in."

"Just stopped by for a jiffy," Mr. Dalrymple assured him, stepping briskly into the hall. "Just wanted to see if——" He stopped talking abruptly and stared into the living-room.

"Mr. Dalrymple," Ames said formally, "this is Larry and Bridget and Peter."

As he indicated the rigid line of children, Bridget swooped down in a perfect curtsy and the two boys bowed, then they all snapped back to attention.

Mr. Dalrymple, who had served on the Inspector-General's staff in the war, looked rather impressed. He pulled at his moustache for a moment, then cleared his throat. "Can't you tell them to stand at ease or something?"

"At ease," Ames said, and the little formation promptly relaxed.

"Very impressive," Mr. Dalrymple said. He turned inquiringly to Ames, but before he could frame a question Bridget stepped forward.

"We just love your little house," she told him.

"It is a beautiful little house," Peter said.

"And we're going to take care of it just like it was ours," Larry promised.

Mr. Dalrymple's eyes widened. "What are they talking about?" he asked.

"Did you ever see such perfectly behaved children!" Ames marvelled.

Mr. Dalrymple gazed at the three cherubic faces turned up to him. "But who are they?" he wondered. "What are they doing here in my house?"

"Why, we live here!" Peter cried. "Didn't you know that, Mr. Dimple?"

"Quiet!" Ames grated.

His command was obeyed: for a moment there was no sound at all. Mr. Dalrymple's moustache, however, had begun to twitch and he had just turned somewhat bleakly to Ames when his attention was diverted by the sound of a door opening.

It was Widow O'Leary. As she entered the living-room her face was still misty and beautiful from her slumbers, her feet were bare, and, but for those distinctly adult charms her dressing gown suggested, she looked quite childlike.

Mr. Dalrymple's reaction to her was instant and electric. His moustache at once stopped twitching and he began to make small cooing noises.

"This, sir, is Mrs. O'Leary," Ames told her, "the mother of these children you have been admiring so much. Mrs. O'Leary, Mr. Dalrymple."

Mr. Dalrymple took Kate's hand and held it while she stared speechlessly at the three little strangers who looked so much like Larry and Bridget and Peter.

"Not at your tender age, my dear," Mr. Dalrymple was saying. "I simply won't believe they're your own."

"Mrs. O'Leary is a widow," Ames went on. "She and her children were desperately in need of a place to stay. It seems, sir, a good many of the people down here don't like to rent to children."

There was a slight pause while Mr. Dalrymple colored slightly, and in that pause Kate looked wonderingly at Ames. Then Mr. Dalrymple was declaring staunchly, "Oh, but who would possibly object to these children!"

"I was sure you'd feel that way," Ames told him quickly. "I felt it was up to me to find other quarters while they moved into the house."

"Ames," said Mr. Dalrymple, "you did absolutely right!"

"Hey, look at Mama!" Peter said.

Kate bit her lip. She wanted to look away from Mr. Ames, or at least to stop looking at him the way she was, but she couldn't seem to manage it.

"She's going to cry, I think," Peter announced.

"I'm not, either!" Kate said, and, instead of crying, she laughed.

Mr. Dalrymple laughed, too, and so did Mr. Ames. Then, quite abruptly, Mr. Dalrymple was taking leave of them, patting the children's heads and squeezing Kate's hand tightly.

When Mr. Ames returned from seeing Mr. Dalrymple to his car, she had her back to him, fiddling with the radio.

"Dismissed," Mr. Ames cried, and the children, who were still standing in line, whooped with relief and began to jump up and down. Larry went out and got Poochie, who came loping in proudly with her bone.

Kate got some music on the radio, and as she turned finally to face Mr. Ames the children were dancing around in circles while Poochie barked at him.

Mr. Ames, she saw, was leaning against the mantel. Suddenly he looked as if he belonged there, a part of that happy, outrageous din. His glance met her own and held it, and for a while they just stood there grinning idiotically at each other over the children's heads.

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For Christmas Day



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First, of course, you've got to have a neat parcel on which to get to work, and if you've ever envied the skill of a good shop assistant wrapping a parcel, here's how to set about it.

Place the unwrapped box or article on a piece of wrapping paper, making sure that the latter will fit with an overlap of an inch or so; at the same time be sure that it is long enough to cover the ends. Then fold the wrapping paper around the box and seal the centre seam with a little transparent Bear Tape. Then fold and seal each end. (You'll find, by the way, that a letter opener or knife will help to make neat creases and end folds.) Now the package is ready for decorating.



And this decorating is the really important part of Christmas packaging. What about a candy stripe design? All you do is take two colours of Bear Gift Wrap Tape and apply them as shown. You end the strips, of course, underneath the package.



Here's another idea for using two or more colours. Apply them in a criss-cross design as illustrated. For added effect you can cut the tape ends at an angle with a razor blade.



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Incidentally, a bow added to a parcel is very attractive, and easy to make. Here's how to make one about three inches long: Take a strip of Bear Gift Wrap Tape or Christmas design tape two feet long and place on a table adhesive side up. Place a second strip, adhesive side down, over the first strip so that the two tapes are joined together evenly, with the adhesive sides together. Trim both ends with scissors. Then loop this double strip back and forth to make a bow with three loops on each side. Finally, fasten the centre with transparent Bear Tape to hold the bow together. If you want bigger or smaller bows, of course, you start with more or less tape.



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Spy and Counterspy

By CLARENCE BUDINGTON KELLAND

The Australian Women's Weekly
Novel. December 2, 1953.
SUPPLEMENT: Must not be Sold Separately



I AM not given to making sociological observations, because my field is electronics—specifically as it applies to high-altitude navigation. But I am compelled to remark that a brat can exert a profound influence upon the occupants of the club car of a train.

This particular brat was about six years old and his youthful mother regarded his antics with pride.

He first attracted my attention by rushing to the front of the car, turning suddenly and shouting in a menacing voice, "Stick 'em up! This is a holdup!" When he noted the surprised expressions upon our faces he exulted, "Scared the daylights out of you, didn't I?"

I had just settled myself to the reading of a pamphlet by Dr. Lucius Boomister, of the Rocket Sonde Branch of Naval Research, entitled The Atmospheric Ocean, but, much to my annoyance, found myself totally unable to concentrate. I had saved this pamphlet, with certain others, as lighter reading to while away the tedium of travel.

I hoped that the mother of the little monster would exert a restraining influence upon him, possibly by applying her palm to a suitable area of his person, but she did not do so.

The brat altered his character, ceasing to be a criminal and becoming a pest. He walked down the car, which was but sparsely occupied, stopping before each passenger and demanding, "Play cards

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with me? I bet I can beat the stuffing out of you."

"He is so friendly," his mother said audibly.

I cleared my throat. "I would apply quite a different epithet to his manners."

This seemed to bring no beneficial result. Upon being rebuffed by all, the young person converted himself into what I took to be a dive bomber and rushed the length of the car uttering discordant sounds. The car gave a lurch and the bomber crashed, not, to my disappointment, colliding with something very hard which might have produced unconsciousness, but butting my neighbor in the midsection.

My neighbor chanced to be a young woman whom I had not heretofore noted. She uttered a distressed noise which sounded like the syllable "Oof." I noted that she was tangled in a complicated manner with the brat.

Quite naturally I relieved her of the incubus, and then, yielding to impulse, laid him across my knee and cuffed his posterior enjoyably. The enjoyment was not his. He emitted horrible shrieks, and, upon being released, kicked me upon the shin and called me a name which I shall not repeat.

"I wish," said a gentleman across the aisle, "that I had done that mayhem."

"It probably," I replied, "will involve me in a suit for damages for assault and battery."

"I," said the young woman adjoining me, "will cheerfully be witness for the defence."

I do not commonly engage in conversation with utter strangers, not from any tendency toward misanthropy, but because I have found that very few of them have anything to say of interest.

However, I found myself involved. I seemed to have brought upon myself a species of popularity.

There comes in the life of every human being, or so I imagine, a critical instant—a moment causing a more or less important alteration in himself, and in the trend of his future.

Such a moment in my own career arrived with the impact of my palm against the brat's bottom. For it caused the intrusion into my orbit of the man Balthasar Toledo, and of the exotic and bewildering Renee du Guesclin.

Melinna says, quite absurdly, that I am the hero of the events which befell at White Sands. Actually, I became involved inadvertently and unwillingly.

Therefore it seems in order to refute the charges that I have been impetuous, meddlesome, rash, and belligerent, and to set forth the sort of individual I am, how my character was formed both by heredity and by environment.

The young woman at my left who was butted in the stomach by the brat was Renee du Guesclin; the gentleman opposite me was Balthasar Toledo. I have been informed that their presence was not mere blind chance, but the result of intention. It may be so. However that may be, let me produce my own defence.

There was, I am informed, considerable debate prior to my christening. My four uncles, my two aunts, and my father are eminent in their several fields of science, history, and philosophy, and each proposed a name for myself.

My father proposed that I should be named Nikola Tesla. Others of my relatives put forward such appellations as Solon, Mercator, Bacon, Volta as fitting names for a baby with an ancestry such as mine.

But my mother, a tiny woman with a big determination, put down her foot.

"If," she said, "my baby must be burdened with a name eminent in science, philosophy, or invention, then it shall be a name he can write in a hotel register without wincing."

"Nonsense, my precious," expostulated my father.

"His name," my mother declared firmly, "shall be Thomas Alva Edison. Then, at least, his boy friends can call him Tom. It may be my son is predestined for an academic life, but at least I shall start him out with a name that gives him a faint chance to become a normal human being, and not a piece of animated laboratory equipment."

I am told by an eyewitness that at this point my mother drew me to her and held me close and gazed at her relatives-in-law with some hostility.

"Tommy," she said to me, "I hope that your horizon will not be the walls of a laboratory or a study. I pray that you will experience some of the lovely blunders that give zest to life. I trust that you will learn by experience that a kiss may be as potent as a cosmic ray; and that before you come to an age of full discretion, you will walk among the emotions of love and fear and hatred and awe and ambition and reverence.

"And not"—here I imagine her fine grey eyes flashed defiantly—"become a desiccated container for dangerous theories which had best not be meddled with. Now, all of you, clear out. I am about to perform that remarkable chemical experiment of administering nourishment to my offspring."

THUS it came about that I bear the name of Thomas Alva Edison Gimp, but my mother, determined as she is, has been potent to modify only in the slightest degree my destiny to become a wanderer in the limitless wilderness of science.

She was able to compel me, in my spare time, to indulge in physical exercises, and even to induce me to take part in various athletics in my college; with the result, so she claims, that I am the largest and bulkiest of all the Gimp family.

My height upon becoming of age was six feet and one inch, and my weight was a hundred and ninety-eight pounds.

But in her secondary purpose, which was to inculcate in me an appreciation and understanding of romance, she failed utterly. And this in spite of the fact that I studied obediently Ivanhoe, Treasure Island, Henry Esmond and The Three Musketeers.

These I found unscientific and, except for certain technical details of the ancient institution of the tourney, intensely boring. With Rowena I was particularly disgusted and the woman Beatrix furnished nothing to enlighten nor to admire.

"Imaginative trash," said my father; in which judgment I concurred, but mother had the last word.

"Nothing," she said, "has ever been accomplished until someone first dared imagine it. All scientific advance is based upon the daring imagination of some free mind."

The conversations that went on under our roof were not tempered to the ears of a child. In the main I listened to discussions far beyond my comprehension, but it was impossible that I should be otherwise than saturated with the constant downpour of science that beat upon me evening after evening.

I fancy my vocabulary—for children pick up words from their seniors and fit them into their own mouths—was fantastic. I was more at home with learned jargon than I was with nursery tales.

As I look back I must have been a timorous urchin. Which brings me to Melinna, who appeared very briefly but importantly in my life, only to disappear for years even from my memory. And then to reappear most astoundingly.

She was a little fat girl of seven years when I encountered her first, and she was not yet eight years old when she vanished from my orbit. But upon me, a ten-year-old, she left her indelible mark.

On the other side of the street lived a boy of about my own age, but smaller and of unbelievable belligerence. For some reason he regarded me as his especial prey. Every time I ventured out of my own yard and into territory which he regarded as his own, he would emit aggressive and threatening whoops and chase me home to the refuge of my own fenced yard.

One morning—I had not reached my eleventh year at the time—I was returning from some errand when this juvenile enemy spied me and, with menacing shouts, bore down upon me. I turned tail and fled for home and the protection of my yard. I was outdistancing my pursuer, being fleet of foot, when I realised that I was being spoken to.

"Big sissy!" said a voice, and I became aware of a fat little girl swinging on a gate.

I slackened my flight a trifle, surprised but not humiliated by her accusation.

"He always—chases—me!" I panted.

"Stop," she said peremptorily, "and fight him, if you're not a nimny."

Quite astonishingly I thought of Rowena and the tournament at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, and the Queen of Love and Beauty, and the heralds shouting at the knights that fair eyes beheld their deeds.

Never before had I imagined that such a scene could have a practical modern application. Nor was the fat little girl an individual one would select to be Queen of Love and Beauty. Nevertheless, a queer thing happened to me, which, perhaps, psychologists could explain. Flight became repugnant. Ivanhoe would not have skedaddled for home as I was doing.

So I halted, and quite without intending to do so, I found myself reversing direction and charging upon my tormentor. He was as surprised as I, and halted, and I collided with him so that he fell upon his back and I found myself sitting on his stomach. He started to bawl, and I was conscious of a curious elation that I never before had experienced. I sat astride of him and did not know what to do next.

The fat little girl leaned over the gate and yelled at me, not excitedly, but calmly.

"Tell him to say 'uncle,'" she directed.

"Say 'uncle'!" I commanded, though I did not know what saying that word would signify.

"Uncle," said my adversary tearfully.

"Now," said the chubby little girl, "let him up. You've licked him."

I scrambled off my recumbent enemy, and he got to his feet and ran pell-mell down the street.

"Never let anybody chase you," the girl said severely. "Now you may come in and play with me."

"I don't want to play with you," I answered.

"Yes, you do," she said; "only you're too bashful."

I was very uncomfortable and embarrassed, and I knew my ears were red. I went away from there without looking back. She swung on her gate and called jeeringly after me. "Yaah! You'll be back, and then I won't play with you!"

As I look back over the years of my life—which are not many, because I am at this hour twenty-seven years of age—I become aware that this was a highly important event with a definite

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effect upon the formation of my character. It taught me, among other things, that individuals of the other sex may exercise an influence over one's actions that cannot be logically explained.

It also taught me that it is more effective and, indeed, more enjoyable, to charge than it is to flee.

I found, to my juvenile annoyance, that this chubby little girl exercised a peculiar attraction which seemed to me mingled with a repulsion. I wanted to have nothing to do with her, but at the same time I was drawn to her proximity. So I spied upon her from behind lilac bushes and fences and other suitable places of concealment, and derived little satisfaction from it.

One morning as I lay prone in a clump of rhododendrons, she came skipping in my direction and stopped and executed some sort of pirouette. I knew she was showing off, which meant that I had been discovered.

"Come out," she said, "I know you're there. I knew you were there yesterday. You are a stupid boy."

"You," I retorted, "are a show-off."

She turned up her nose at me.

"Everybody says," she jeered, "that your parents and your uncles and your aunts are raising you to be a juvenile prodigy. What's a juvenile prodigy? My uncle says you will probably turn out to be a dud."

"I am not any prodigy!" I said furiously. "My mother, who knows, says everything about me is normal but my environment, and she's going to see to it I rise superior to that."

"You talk like a nasty prodigy," she said. "Do you believe in space ships?"

"In what?"

"In an airship that can travel through space and go to Mars and Saturn and other planets, and fight with the wicked inhabitants, who have eight legs, and rescue the beautiful lavender-colored princess?"

"I never," said I, feeling very superior, "heard of such nonsense."

"It's in a book," she answered, as if that settled the matter. "You wait right here and I'll get the book."

Presently she returned with a volume and sat by while I read it. It was about a rocket ship that navigated interstellar space, and a boy who had strange adventures. I did not care greatly about the adventures but the idea of a ship that could penetrate the earth's atmosphere and, relying upon the jet propulsion, travel at enormous speeds through space to other planets fascinated me. The author of the book made it sound very logical and scientific and feasible.

"So there," said the girl. "If it's in a book it's so." She regarded me with a look in her eyes that made me very uncomfortable. "If you," she said, "are such a prodigy, you will invent a space ship and take me with you on voyages up—up there!" and she pointed to the sky.

"I'll invent a space ship," I said firmly, "but I won't take any girls along, you can bet."

"Then," she said, "you're nothing but a mean, selfish, nasty juvenile prodigy. And you'll probably end up cutting out paper dolls. My uncle says so."

Someone in her house called, "Puddin'" and she got up and went away. It was all the name I ever heard for her, at least for many years. I did not see her again. It seems she was a visitor in Professor Mason's house—some kind of niece or something. And she went away. But for the second time in a week she had modified my life.

She had aroused in me an interest in jet propulsion and the possibilities of navigating space beyond the earth's atmosphere which has not diminished, but on the contrary has increased to this day—to the extent that I have devoted my talents, such as they are, to the study of jet propulsion, guided missiles, and electronic controls.

With the result that today, at the age of twenty-seven, having been investigated meticulously by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as to my loyalty to the United States of America, I am on my way westward to a place in the desert of New Mexico known as White Sands Proving Ground, there to aid, in a civilian capacity, in the development of rockets capable of exploring the atmosphere which surrounds the earth, and the space above it.

I am also to take part in experiments which may result in the production of a weapon of war which may be launched, say, in New Mexico, and guided by a robot electronic brain so exactly that, within a matter of minutes, it will reach the office in which the Kremlin bosses sit dictating the policies of Soviet Russia to the detriment of the world.

I am convinced by years of study that such a weapon, of such long range and accuracy, is now well within the bounds of scientific possibility.

My life has been rather on the monastic side, so that my experience with women, save laboratory assistants and others living more or less devoted lives, has been negligible. I may say that I have been practically unconscious of women as members of another sex.

The young woman who sat next me in the club car of the Golden State Limited was unmistakably of another sex. She seemed to make a point of advertising that fact. She clothed herself in such a manner as to call to one's attention the contours of her person, and her movements and postures only emphasised the purely animal character of her femininity.

I found myself looking at her surreptitiously with something more than the normal disinterest which one bestows upon strangers. Indeed, I found it impossible to keep my eyes away from her. She, also, seemed to be surveying me.

"You," she said unexpectedly, "are a big man." She almost said "beeg man," with the merest trace of foreign accent.

"I am," I told her, "six feet and one inch in height, and my weight is a hundred and ninety-eight pounds."

"So it should be," she observed—"big and strong, but not bulging."

"I do not bulge," I said firmly.

"It is an evident thing," she agreed. "You are perhaps a famous athlete?"

"I am a scientist," I informed her.

"But in such condition!" she exclaimed. "Such fitness."

I MADE no comment and, after a moment, the young woman asked, "What science is yours?"

"I am," said I, "presently engaged in electronic research as it bears upon rocket vehicles."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, wide-eyed. "To fly to the moon!"

"So far," I said, "our success has fallen somewhat short of that. It is measured by hundreds of miles rather than millions."

"And you have gone so high!" she exclaimed with manifest admiration.

"No one," I said, "has ascended so high." I spoke austerely because I have little patience with persons who discuss topics of which they have no knowledge.

"My name," she said unexpectedly, "is Renee du Gueschin."

"Mine," I responded politely, "is Thomas Alva Edison Gimp."

"So now," she smiled at me, "we are introduced, is it not?"

"We have exchanged names," said I, "which is quite a different matter."

"How different?" she asked.

"An introduction," said I, "presupposes a sponsor for one person or the other — a common acquaintance who, in effect, makes himself responsible in presenting one person to another. He performs an act in which tacitly, he guarantees the characters and backgrounds and integrity of the two strangers involved. We have only named our names, with no one to guarantee our respectability."

"How very formal you are," she said. "Now, I am not formal at all."

"Formality," said I, "is but another name for rules of behaviour that have stood the test of time and experience."

"Me," she said, making a little grimace, "I like to break rules."

Although I would have preferred that she desist from annoying me with bootless conversation, she showed no signs of doing so. She was a chattering woman. "I," she said, "would like to fly to Mars."

"In heaven's name, why?" I asked with some impatience. "If, with your untrained mind, you reached the planet Mars and returned, your observations would be without value to science."

"Must everything you do have a value?"

"Yes," I said.

"I think that is nonsense," she said. "You do things for fun or for excitement. I love to do things that are exciting. Don't you ever do things just for fun or excitement?"

"Never," said I. "Definitely not for excitement. When one becomes excited he loses his mental balance."

"I have found that to be just dandy. The loveliest things happen when you lose your mental balance—when it is the heart that takes control and not the mind."

"The heart," said I, "is a mere piece of mechanism whose chief function is to propel blood through the veins and arteries. How can a—a piece of meat control the reason?"

"So that," she asked, tilting her head sidewise, "is your idea of the business of a heart?"

"Precisely," I rejoined.

She shook her head. "You are so very learned," she told me, "but you are so very ignorant." She moved her head up and down three times in an emphatic way. "It would be fun to teach you."

"Fun," I said.

"Have you ever been in love, professor? Or is it doctor?"

"Doctor," said I. "An earned and not an honorary degree. Definitely I never have been in love. I may add that I find this a strange conversation."

"I," she retorted, "am a strange woman."

I became aware that the man across from us — who looked more like a romanticised statue than a man—was listening with a smile of amusement. He was a big man, as large as myself. His clothing was the perfection of tailoring. His hair was not white with age, for he seemed in his early thirties, but of that shade that women refer to as platinum. And it waved in a manner that made you think he devoted attention to its care.

He was by no means a flamboyant figure, but he was distinctly noticeable. His smile, as our eyes met, was ironical. His glance caused me a slight embarrassment, and I turned my eyes away.

In the second seat from him sat an older man, who might have reached his fortieth year. He was not Anglo-Saxon. I took him to be a member of one of the southern races, with his liquid brown eyes and olive complexion. Something about his grey suit informed me that it had not been tailored in the United States. I hazarded a guess that he was a citizen of the republic south of the Rio Grande.

He, too, was peering at me, but without amusement, indeed with the hint of a frown. His was a very acute face, with resolute jaw. It seemed to me that

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my conversation with Miss du Guesclin was causing the two gentlemen amusement on the part of one and distaste on the part of the other.

Miss du Guesclin commanded my attention. "I am hungry," she said. "Shall we go in to dinner?"

It seemed to me that this suggestion was not warranted by anything that had preceeded it: indeed, that it was forward. But I did not know how to repulse her. She arose and preceded me, walking sinuously, so that one became aware of her hips and of the swaying of them. I did not realise until we reached the dining car that the two gentlemen across the aisle had arisen as we did, and were upon our heels.

In the diner there was only one vacant table, which seated four persons. The steward conducted Miss du Guesclin and me to it and seated us facing forward. The two gentlemen appropriated the seats opposite us. Each of them bowed—a courtesy which I returned. We addressed ourselves to the menu and ordered.

I was attracted by the appearance of the man whom I had taken to be Mexican. He moved gracefully, was slender but giving the appearance of wiry strength. I was not attracted by the other man, nor by his massiveness or the artificiality of his appearance.

"What time," asked the Mexican of me, "do we reach Kansas City?"

It was doubtless a mere polite manner of dispelling any awkwardness that might exist. I informed him of the hour of our arrival in that city.

"Am I," he asked, "mistaken in identifying you as Doctor Gimp?"

"That," said I, "is my name."

"It is an honor," he said, "to be dining with a scientist of such eminence."

It was effusive, and I do not know how to cope with effusiveness. It flusters me. I mumbled an inappropriate reply. The other man then spoke.

"I," he said, "am Doctor Balthasar Toledo."

"Indeed," said I. "Medicine?"

"Fine Arts," he replied. He smiled, and I must admit his smile was not without charm. "I'm supposed," he said, "to be quite a dabster in Renaissance paintings. If someone deals for a Titian, I tell him if it is genuine."

"And I," said the Mexican, "am Senor Iturbe, of Mexico City. A mere man of business."

This seemed to require that I introduce Miss du Guesclin, which I did with some reluctance.

"You are going to the coast, doctor?" asked Toledo.

"I alight at El Paso," I informed him.

"Ah, yes. Ah, yes. I should have guessed. On your way to White Sands?"

"On my way to White Sands," I answered.

"A tremendous work they are doing, which may have profound effect upon the future of the world."

Senor Iturbe was peering at me intently, brows knitted. I had a feeling that he was striving to convey a message of caution. It was not necessary. I am not one to babble secrets, even though I may be in many ways a guileless man of science. I have found that one way to discourage curiosity and to preserve secrecy upon matters best not discussed is to seem erudite garrulous.

It was now perfectly apparent to me that the art expert, Balthasar Toledo, wished to lead me into conversation about White Sands and the topic of guided missiles. So I launched into a spate of scientific jargon which ended by boring him hopelessly.

Even Miss du Guesclin ceased to ply me with her undoubtedly potent animal attributes, and yawned. We finished dessert hurriedly and, in the club car, I said goodnight and made my way to my bedroom, which I had some difficulty in locating. I always experienced this minor vexation.

Each time I seek my quarters for the night on a train it is a lesser adventure, usually terminating in my having to demand the assistance of some uniformed official in leading me to my bed.

It is my habit to arise early, so I breakfasted without encountering my acquaintances of the night before. I returned speedily to my compartment where I occupied myself pleasantly reading a paper by Doctor Griffith, of Yale University.

I ventured forth again at noon, but was not molested, though I sat in the club car for an hour. Miss du Guesclin did not appear, nor Doctor Toledo, nor Senor Iturbe, the least objectionable member of the trio.

It would not be long now until I arrived at my destination, El Paso; so I arose and moved toward my compartment to see that my impedimenta was packed and secured, and that I did not, according to my custom, debark from the train leaving behind pyjamas or toilet articles.

This time I moved surely and without bewilderment, and confidently opened a door off the passage-way My own quarters were Bedroom E in Car 426. The door that I opened and entered so surely was Bedroom E in Car 425, as I subsequently discovered.

I was disgruntled to find someone sprawled upon the seat which at night was made into my berth.

"I beg your pardon!" I said severely.

The man did not move. I entered farther, and was able to identify the intruder. It was Senor Iturbe, and something was wrong with him.

The thing that was wrong with him was that the handle of a knife protruded from his back, and I did not need to make a more detailed examination to be informed that he was dead.

THIS was my first encounter with violent death, and I was appalled. I retreated into the corridor.

At the end of the car a porter sat drowsing, and I summoned him. He came to me and I stood aside so that he could look into the bedroom.

"There has," I said, "been a murder. Summon the conductor at once."

He scurried away and I took the precaution to close the door, so that the interior of the room would be concealed from the eyes of passers-by.

In a matter of minutes, the porter returned with the conductor, and with a thin young man in a neat blue suit.

"What's this? What's this?" the conductor demanded.

"A gentleman," said I—calmly, I believe—"has been murdered. His name is Iturbe."

"You discovered him, Doctor Gimp?" the young man in the blue suit asked. "How?"

"I," I answered, "blundered into the wrong bedroom." Somewhat shamefacedly, I added, "I have a way of getting lost on trains."

His eyes twinkled momentarily; then he opened the door and entered the little cubicle, where he stood looking down upon the body. Then he turned to me. "Doctor," he asked, "do you think you can find your own bedroom?"

"I'm sure I can," I replied.

"Then," he directed, "you will please go to it and remain there until I come for you. You will mention this to no one."

"I hope I will not be detained as a witness," I said, "I should get to my destination without delay."

"You will not be detained," he answered. "You will reach White Sands without delay."

"You know my name and my destination."

"So it would seem," he said with a smile. "Now, if you please, be so good as to dissociate yourself from this unpleasant affair promptly. I will come for you when we reach El Paso."

I withdrew and walked to the next car, which was the correct one, and entered my bedroom. It would be an untruth to state that I was not shaken or bewildered by the turn of events. The young man in the blue suit knew my name and destination; he seemed to desire that I should not be involved in the murder.

He seemed to have taken command of the situation, and the conductor made no objection. I wondered who and what he could be.

I completed the packing of my belongings and sat staring out of the window until we reached the outskirts of the city of El Paso and drew into the station. There came a knock upon my door, and I opened it. The young man in the blue suit stood there.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Quite ready," I said.

"Your baggage checks, please." He extended his hand and I gave him the check to my trunk. He accompanied me off the train, took my suitcase and escorted me into the station. There at the information desk waited a young man in the uniform of a private in the United States Army.

"For Doctor Gimp?" my companion asked.

"Yes, sir," the soldier said.

"You have a car?"

"Yes, sir."

This time the soldier took my suitcase and we walked out of the building to a military car that waited at the kerb. The young man in the blue suit extended his hand with a grin.

"I think you'll get there all right now," he said, "without blundering into anything else. . . . Keep an eye on the doctor," he said to the soldier.

"Yes, sir," answered the boy.

"Thank you. You have been very helpful," I said.

"Thanks are quite unnecessary," he smiled. "I earn my living this way."

We drove out of the city, through a huge military installation, which my driver informed me was Fort Bliss, and out into the desert.

"We'll have to take the long way," he said. "The roads are closed on the short cut."

"Why?" I asked.

"They're shooting off things today," he answered.

We proceeded at a rapid pace through desert terrain that bristled with military signs warning the tourist. At last we came to a tiny roadside structure from which emerged a young man in a well-fitting grey-blue uniform. We alighted and went inside with him, where I signed things and was given a card to identify me.

A young woman sat in a chair in the corner. As the formalities were completed she arose and came toward us.

"Hello, Peter," she said to the soldier. "You're my transportation."

"Glad to have you, Miss Brown," he said, and then rather awkwardly, "Miss Brown, this is Doctor Gimp."

She gave me a small hand. "We've been expecting you," she said, and gave me an odd little sidewise look. "I'm a laboratory assistant."

"Charmed," I said mechanically, giving her the barest glance. It sufficed to show me that she was a tiny person with brown hair and eyes, slender, with a piquant face which might almost be characterised as mischievous.

We went out and I helped her into the car and took my place beside her.

"Is this your first visit to White Sands?" Miss Brown asked.

"My first."

"Then," she said, "to make conver-

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sation I'll tell you that this Army Ordnance proving ground is forty miles wide and a hundred miles long. Ninety miles north of headquarters is the place where the first atomic bomb was touched off. There are about two thousand civilians working here, and a couple of thousand soldiers. Maybe seven hundred women, which isn't enough to go around. The food is middling and the recreation doesn't make you turn flip-flops. It's hotter than a furnace in summer, and colder than a snake's heart in winter. Anything else?"

"You chatter," I said firmly.

"It makes me a social asset," she said.

"Not with me," I replied.

"Wait," she said, "until you've been here a month, and I'll grow on you."

"I shall have no time for diversions or for women."

"Doctor," she said gravely, "the time is not long distant, in this arid country, when even a female scorpion will have its attractions."

I assumed an expression of austerity intended to discourage further feminine dithering. She became demure and fell silent. After a mile or two of this, I was conscious of a species of social discomfort, and found it necessary to speak.

"You wear a badge," said I.

"Everybody wears badges," she said. "Security. We're nuts on security. We're classified. Some get a badge that entitles them to breathe. Some get a badge that entitles them to open their eyes after dinner. Some get a badge that entitles them to go through gates, and some a badge that lets them enter doors. This one," she said, touching the oblong affixed to her left breast, "is the real aristocrat of badges. It entitles you to know all, to see all, to go anywhere, and to keep your mouth shut. You'll have one like it."

"Indeed," I said.

Ahead, buildings became visible. I saw in a battery installations for the cameras that photographed missiles in flight. To the right was a structure whose flat roof bristled with the bowl-like discs of a radar installation. Miss Brown indicated the building.

"That," she said, "is as full of miracles as a girl's head is of romance."

"An absurd simile," said I.

"Can you think of anything fuller?" she demanded.

"The heads of girls," said I, "are quite outside my field of research."

Then she said an odd thing that touched a chord of memory. It was only a faint, elusive vibration, not then to be identified by me, but disturbing.

"They," she said tartly, "did succeed in raising a prodigy." And then, "They might, as an afterthought, have added a pinch of normal this and that to the prescription."

To this, I responded nothing, setting it down as mere feminine gibberish.

"But it may not be too late," she said.

We now approached the cluster of buildings and drew up before broad steps which climbed to the entrance to post headquarters.

"Colonel Ramsay," she said, "is on the second floor, third office to the left." She grinned in an irritating way. "I looked in the crystal ball," she said. "It says we'll be seeing each other."

"I doubt it," I responded.

"Peter," she said, "will take me to the lab. Then he'll come back and cart you to your lodging for the night."

"Good afternoon," I said formally.

I alighted and entered the building where I went through the formalities of being inducted into the intricate life of White Sands. I received my badge, from which I must never be parted, was instructed to report in the morning to Doctor Newcomb, at the laboratory, and was then driven to my quarters for the night in what I took to be a sort of officers' club.

Peter carried my baggage to the room assigned to me. I bathed, changed my linen, and suddenly was overcome by a feeling of loneliness combined with claustrophobia. I put on my hat and strolled out into the late-afternoon sunshine.

I had not reached the road when a car stopped and a slender, wiry officer alighted. He wore the insignia of an Army major.

"Doctor Gimp?" he asked.

"I am he," said I.

He extended a hand which gripped mine with firmness. His shrewd grey eyes surveyed me so that I felt he was acquainting himself with the exact position of every button on my clothing and every freckle on my face. His smile was pleasant, but a trifle grim.

"I," he said, "am Major Van Tuyl, chief of intelligence and security."

"Delighted," I said courteously.

"You may not be," he answered.

"And why not, sir?"

"Because," he said, "I sometimes ask people to do disagreeable things."

"Such as?" I inquired.

"In your case," he replied, "not living at ease in quarters assigned to you here."

"I do not understand."

"You don't need to understand," he said abruptly. "I cannot order you. I can only make the request."

"What request, sir?"

"That you live in El Paso and commute to the laboratory twice a day. There are buses."

"It seems an unnecessary hardship."

"Let me be the judge of necessity," he said. "A comfortable apartment will be provided you in El Paso."

"And what do I do there, major?"

"Nothing," he answered.

"Then," said I, "your request seems absurd."

He smiled again, and in a friendly manner. "They also serve," he quoted, "who only stand and wait."

"For what do I wait?"

"Maybe," he said grimly, "for nothing. Maybe for all hell to break loose."

"I am a scientist," said I, "not a man of action. I would not know how to conduct myself if all hell should break loose."

MAJOR VAN TUYL surveyed me again and grinned. "You've got the size and weight for it," he observed. "Boys who were not accustomed to it died in Asia."

"I've no ambition to die."

"And we," he said, "have every ambition to keep you alive."

"Let me understand," said I. "You are requesting, not ordering, me to occupy an apartment in El Paso?"

"Precisely."

"Which," I continued, "may involve me in the breaking loose, as you express it, of hell?"

"Exactly," he said.

"To what end?" I asked.

"Even though you are immersed in scientific research," he said, "I take it you are not unaware of unrest in the world."

"It has come to my attention," I said dryly.

"Also," he said, "that you might be willing to be of service to your country in ways we might call extra-scientific."

"I," said I, "am not without veneration for this republic."

"So I imagined after reading your dossier."

"What will I be required to do in El Paso?"

"Lead a normal life. Do not avoid people who show a desire to make your acquaintance. Simply be yourself."

Now I am also not without a rudimentary intelligence in matters outside the field of science. The idea was penetrating. For some reason he wished me to take upon myself the role of bait for some sort of quarry. I shrugged and smiled at him.

"Do you read Kipling?" I asked.

"I know him almost by memory."

"Then," said I, "you will recall the quotation. I think it is to be found in Stalky and Company: 'The bleating of the kid excites the tiger.'"

Now he grinned broadly. "I take it you will be willing to be the kid?"

"But with no keen desire," said I, "to excite the tiger."

"If you should," he said, "there will be a hunter up a nearby tree who is an excellent marksman."

"Very well," I said. "But I hope your hunter does not run out of ammunition at the crucial moment."

He extended his hand. "Obliged," he said. "Now suppose we forget all about it and have dinner at the officers' club."

"I greatly fear," said I, "that you have ruined my appetite."

I awoke early the next morning and went and had my breakfast in the pleasant dining-room. A number of young naval officers were seated at a common table with me. They greeted me courteously and without curiosity to see a civilian among their fresh uniforms.

I finished my breakfast and was just leaving the dining-room when a tall, stooping gentleman with an intelligent, arresting face came in from outside and mentioned my name to the attendant. I approached him.

"Dr. Gimp?" he inquired, extending a hand.

"Dr. Newcomb," I responded.

"Welcome to White Sands," he said with real cordiality. "We've been needing you."

"I hope I shall not be valueless," I replied.

He conducted me to the door. "I thought it possible," he said, "that you might like to orient yourself. I have a car. I would be delighted to show you about our metropolis."

He drove me about the not inconsiderable area, pointing out various buildings and naming their functions.

We passed an athletic field, a theatre, a chapel. We saw the Navy's swimming pool, and the laboratory with its imposing entrance, and the bank, and the dispensary. There were mess halls, clubs for enlisted men and officers, and on the outskirts hard by the housing area a number of house trailers huddling together.

"All three Services are represented," said Dr. Newcomb. "Army, Navy and Air." He grinned. "They live very peacefully and co-operate. No need to drive out to the launching sites," he said. "We'll be going out there this afternoon. Army's going to launch some rockets. You'll want to see that."

We covered the immediate area thoroughly, and then alighted at the laboratory, where Dr. Newcomb showed me the room that was to be mine and conducted me over the premises.

A civilian guard in grey-blue uniform, with a pistol on his hip, guarded the outer door and scrutinised our badges sceptically, even though Dr. Newcomb was so well acquainted with him as to call him Paddy.

"Security," the doctor grinned. "These guards are all ex-servicemen. Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to stop everybody at every door and gate. Won't even let a dog through without a badge, lest it carry subversive fleas."

I was, of course, introduced to various colleagues, who were gracious and whose names I would have to catalogue and remember. In the corridor I passed Miss Brown, who grinned at the doctor and then eyed me mischievously.

"So you caught up with the prodigy," she said gaily. "He's going to give our

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social life a shot in the arm. I rode in with him yesterday. He's a wolf, doctor. You wouldn't think it to look at him, but he's a ravening wolf. I didn't draw a long breath till I got out of the car."

"I," said I stiffly, "do not know why I should be referred to as other than a human being."

"Miss Brown," said the doctor, his eyes twinkling, "gives off reactions."

"Which," said I, "I trust will not come within my purview."

She turned her head to one side and peered up at me impertinently. "That," she replied, "I am taking under consideration."

She passed on her way, and Doctor Newcomb and I sat down in his office for a necessary conference. He sat behind his desk and looked at me slantwise.

"Just how," he asked, "did you ruffle Miss Brown's feathers?"

"I'm sure I do not know. I tried to ignore her."

"Ah," he said, and nodded. "One does not ignore Miss Brown."

We spent the remainder of the morning in agreeable technical conversation, after which we went to lunch in the officers' club. Some time after our return we were driven out to a launching site. Again we were stopped at a gate by a civilian guard whom we had to satisfy as to our right to pass.

Off to our right I saw an enormous gantry crane, a huge skeleton of steel with platforms which could be lowered within its arch to work upon rockets.

Just ahead of us was a massive launching-control building, commonly called a blockhouse, constructed of concrete, its roof in the shape of a truncated pyramid. For the safety of those working inside, this roof is a solid block twenty-seven feet in thickness.

Scattered about were various vehicles, camera stations, trucks for the transportation of rockets, and off to the left were two slender vicious white projectiles on their launching platforms.

More to the right I perceived a smaller, slenderer guided missile denominated "Nike." It reclined on its carriage ready to be moved at a later time into launching position.

We walked across the concrete area and entered the blockhouse. Here was a room whose walls seemed to be lined with steel filing cases, but these, upon examination, proved to be a battery or batteries of electronic devices for receiving and recording information returning from the rocket in flight or from other recording devices located in stations along the line of flight.

Before us was a block of glass facing towards the launching area. It was many inches thick, but so clear that one could see through it easily.

Behind this window we stationed ourselves. Across the intervening space we could see a number of men preparing the two rockets for their impending flight.

The wait seemed interminable, but at last a man was sent outside to discharge a warning flare. Then, over the loud-speaker, a voice commenced to count in reverse. "Twenty . . . nineteen . . . eighteen . . . seventeen," — ticking off the seconds. The number diminished: "Seven . . . six . . . five . . . four . . . three . . .two . . . one."

Tension built up within us. As the last second vanished into the past, there was a tremendous flare of almost unbearable light and an almost simultaneous blast of sound. It was not an explosion, but a Gargantuan whoosh which seemed bent upon tearing out the eardrums.

We strained our eyes. Objects became visible, but the rocket was gone. In the air remained nothing but wisps of vapor. The great projectile had vanished into the void.

"Everything lovely," said Doctor Newcomb. He chuckled. "Not always so. We launched a captured German V2 not so long ago. It started its flight, and when it got up a little way it turned eccentric. It cut off at right angles and headed for Mexico. Next we heard of it, it had plumped down in a graveyard across the border. No harm done."

We waited for the launching of the second rocket and drove back to the laboratory, where a message awaited me asking me to telephone Major Van Tuyl. I did so, and was promptly connected with the chief of intelligence and security.

"If it's agreeable," he said, "we're driving you to El Paso this evening, with your baggage. Want to get you safely settled."

"The attractive word in that sentence," said I, "is safely."

I could hear his chuckle. "When shall the car come for you?" he asked.

"I'm ready now," I answered.

Presently my baggage was placed in the rear of the car and I was on my way to the Texas border city. There was the driver, of course, but sitting in the back seat with me was a young man who introduced himself as Mr. Martin.

He wore a neat blue suit and rather resembled the young man whom I had met on the train and who had unexpectedly taken charge of my affairs until I was safely ensconced in a motor-car on my way to White Sands.

"Would you," I asked, "Be one of Major Van Tuyl's security personnel?"

"No," he said, "I'm a special agent, FBI. We co-operate. White Sands works directly with our field office in Albuquerque. But this time a little help from El Paso seemed to be indicated."

Upon our arrival in El Paso I was conducted to a modest but pleasant apartment house. My quarters consisted of living-room, bedroom, and kitchenette, whose larder had been supplied with breakfast necessities.

"Satisfactory?" asked my companion.

"Completely," I answered. We sat down and he smoked. I am not a user of tobacco.

"May I ask," said I, "what is expected of me?"

"Nothing," he said. "Just go ahead and behave in a perfectly normal manner."

"The criticism has been facetiously made of me," said I, "that I never behave in a so-called normal manner."

He grinned amiably. "In that case," he said, "behave in any eccentric manner you choose . . . You will find a reasonably good dining-room in this building." He arose, extended his hand and said, "Nice to have met you, doctor."

"Shall I be seeing you, sir?" I asked.

"That," he replied, "depends."

"Upon what?" I asked.

"Whether," he said, "the fish are taking flies or worms or grasshoppers."

I found myself alone.

I spent some time in arranging my not extensive wardrobe and the few books which I had brought with me. Then I bathed, shaved, and took the elevator down to the dining-room.

I dined heartily and fared forth to stroll about this strange and doubtless interesting city. I walked at random and after an interval found myself in the business heart of El Paso, a brightly lighted area of stores, hotels, and places of amusement.

I paused to peer through a show window at a display of devices calculated to ameliorate the labors of the housewife, such as machines for the washing of dishes or the cleansing of clothes, or the beating of eggs, and reflected that the business of living seemed on the verge of becoming largely a matter of turning electric switches. I wondered if the race would learn to utilise wisely the leisure resulting from its mechanisation.

As I turned away from this display I became aware of the approach of a young woman whose lithe movements, especially the sway of the hips, were vaguely familiar.

My eyes travelled upwards from the lower members to her face, and I recognised, with no enthusiasm, the young person who had sat beside me in the club car of the Golden State Limited, and who had given her name as Renee du Guesclin.

"Why, Dr. Gimp!" she exclaimed. "How unexpected!"

"Neither expected nor unexpected," said I. "A mere negligible encounter."

"Oh, no, indeed!" she said. "I found you so interesting, doctor. It seemed too bad that we should merely meet briefly and never see each other again."

"I doubt," said I, "if we should find common interests."

"You," she replied with gravity, "are an attractive man. I am not a hideous woman. Does not that establish a common interest?"

"You refer, I suppose," said I, "to the attraction of sex?"

She looked up at me oddly and not without surprise. "Doctor," she said with an enigmatic smile, speaking with the merest trace of foreign accent, "sex is to be observed that you do not beat about bushes, but come at once to the point."

I lifted my hat. "Good evening, Miss du Guesclin," I said with intentional abruptness.

I turned away to proceed on my way. As I did so I heard a cry of pain and faced her again. "Oh," she said faintly, "I have turn' my ankle."

"A difficult thing to do," said I, "when one is standing still."

She seemed about to fall, and quite naturally I extended a supporting hand. She clung to me.

"You," she said pleadingly, "must get for me a taxicab! You must help me to my home!"

It was an appeal I found myself unable to refuse. After a short delay, I managed to attract the attention of the driver of a cab, and then half carried, half supported Miss du Guesclin to a seat within it.

I was interested to note that I found this contact with her person not unpleasant. It would seem that there are reactions and emotions which affect the individual quite independently of intellect.

Miss Du Guesclin gave an address to the taxi-driver and sat back in her corner, holding her ankle in her hands as if it pained her. Her distress caused her to forget that perfect modesty upon which our mothers and grandmothers set such store. I mean to say that quite naively and innocently her posture displayed a considerable area of her lower limbs and that, in the dim light, I had to be quite resolute to avert my eyes from the spectacle.

There was no conversation. Miss du Guesclin evinced a silent fortitude, uttering no exclamation indicative of pain.

The cab came to a stop before a low white house of the variety known as a ranch house, and I helped the young lady out. Her disability to walk was more pronounced, and she leaned heavily upon me as we mounted the steps and arrived at the door. She fumbled in her bag and produced a key which she handed to me. I inserted it in the keyhole and opened the door. The hallway was lighted, as was a living-room at the left.

"In there, please," she said, and I assisted her to a chair, into which she

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lowered herself, assuming much the same position as had been hers in the cab. There was this difference: the light was much better and my standing at a slight distance supplied a superior vantage point.

"Should I," I asked, "summon a physician?"

"No, no. Eef you will just help to remove the shoe."

I was embarrassed by this request, but it was an emergency to which I must respond. I knelt and somewhat awkwardly removed her shoe.

"There seems," said I, "to be no swelling."

"Already," she said, "it feels better."

"In that case," said I, "I will bid you good evening."

"But not yet! I have not thank' you. I have not offer' hospitality. You Americans! Always Scotch and soda."

"When I drink," said I, "I prefer beer, but I am not thirsty."

"Nonsense," she said peremptorily. "I, too, love beer. You will find it in the icebox. The kitchen is through the dining-room yonder."

"But——" I protested.

"In the icebox," she repeated.

I could see no way of extricating myself. I determined to sip one glass and take my departure. While I was absent I heard the telephone jangle, and when I returned, Miss du Gueselin had hobbled across the room to the instrument.

It was a brief conversation, of which, of course, I could hear but one side.

"Yes," she said, "it is I."

There was a pause while the individual at the other end of the line spoke. She replied testily, "I know my business."

There was another silence. Again Miss du Gueselin spoke. "Definitely roped," she said. I considered this to be cryptic. "Like," she went on, "snatching candy from a baby . . . Enough. Good-night."

She hobbled back to her chair. Somehow she managed to make the uneven gait attractive.

"Is it not a pleasant house?" she asked.

"My impression was," said I, "that you were travelling to the coast."

"But no!" she exclaimed. "This is the house of a friend. It was lent to me. You like?"

"It seems habitable," I assured her.

"If," said she, "you would rub my ankle."

"Definitely not," I replied.

"It does not bite," she observed.

"It is a familiarity," said I, "which only your inexperience would suggest."

"And you," she said, "you have thees experience?"

"Certainly not," said I.

She shrugged. "What do you in El Paso? I thought White Sands."

"I shall live here," said I, "and commute."

"How lovely," she said, displaying pleasure. "We shall be neighbors. That is good. The evenings are long when one is alone. You will be lonely. I will be lonely. It is a coincidence."

"I shall not be lonely," said I.

She smiled very prettily. "Then," she said, "you will take pity on me, no?"

"No," I said.

"That," she stated, "we shall see."

I arose and moved towards the door.

"Must you go?" she asked.

"It is not," said I, "a matter of compulsion, but of preference."

"Such beest words," she said, indicating by holding her hands far apart. "Oh, I have such ignorance. You could teach me so much. I think," she said with a little moue, "I should learn so fast."

"I am not," I said austerely, "a tutor for young ladies."

She smiled up at me very charmingly. "Perhaps," she said, "the young lady could be a tutor for you . . . If it must be so, then good-night, doctor. You will come again soon?"

"Neither," said I, "soon nor late."

She laughed outright, as at some witticism. "That we shall see," she said, and extended her hand, which nestled in my own warmly. It seemed to express something which I could not translate. Nevertheless, the sensation was not unpleasant.

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It was my intention, after a somewhat fatiguing day, to return to my apartment and retire immediately. But this, my first evening in El Paso, was not to terminate so uneventfully. It remained for me to make yet another acquaintance in somewhat absurd and bizarre circumstances.

I walked at my usual deliberate pace for a couple of blocks and was decending a street which tilted downwards not sharply, but noticeably. My thoughts were turned inward, appraising the conduct of Miss du Gueselin towards myself; when I heard on the sloping cement walk behind me a loud outcry, and turning, saw descending upon me a quite incredible missile.

My first startled glance disclosed to me an impossibly fat man in a sitting posture, being propelled at me with some speed.

He seemed to be waving his arms and uttering alarmed outcries. Behind him, in pursuit, was a colored man, who ran frantically, but could not overtake the adipose personage.

IT seemed at first that this man was being discharged at me in a trajectory a foot or so above the sidewalk; indeed, that he was flying through the air at low altitude. But then my startled eyes descried wheels and the arms of a chair which were almost wholly concealed by the billowing bulk of the man who occupied this conveyance.

This outlandish projectile was almost upon me when I moved spryly in obedience to reflexes and removed myself from its path. Whether my subsequent immediate action was impelled by instinctive reflexes or by swiftly taken resolution, I cannot determine. Nevertheless, as fat man and wheeled chair came abreast of me, I crouched, bracing myself determinedly, and snatched.

My hands closed upon the back of the vehicle, to which I clung. I found myself much in the position of the small boy at the end of the line playing the game of crack-the-whip. The chair, the fat man, and I spun. Nevertheless, I clung tenaciously, with the result that, after a couple of revolutions, we came to a standstill facing in the reverse direction.

Nor did the chair capsize, due doubtless to the low centre of gravity and the tremendous weight of its occupant. I regained my feet, conscious of a rent in my trousers and of an abraded knee.

I stood somewhat breathless, scrutinising the individual whom my promptness and resolution had rescued from serious injury or possible death. For a moment I doubted my eyes, feeling that perhaps my vision had been impaired by my dizzy whirl.

But I actually saw what I thought I was seeing. I saw an enormous head, a monstrous face somewhat resembling illustrations of an orge in childhood's fairy tales.

The eyes were very large and staring; under a huge and thick-lipped mouth was the great-grandfather of all chins. It was not pendulous, but solid, of the size of a considerable grapefruit. The ears were fanlike and the nose broad and flat. As to his hair, it was a repulsive shade of orange-yellow, and it stood out from his skull like an untidy halo. Never have I seen so repulsive a countenance.

The rest of the man was in keeping with his head — gross, unbelievably adipose and unwieldy. The girth of his legs and arms was fantastic and his stomach was Gargantuan. When you add to this the fact that he must have been well above the average height, you have an astounding mass of human flesh.

While I stared in a most unmannerly way, a voice issued from the enormous human blob. It was startling. It was quite the most winning human voice I ever had heard. It was rich, musical, beautiful. And the accents were those of a man of rare culture. It was as if the song of a mocking-bird proceeded from the mouth of a hippopotamus.

"Sir," he said, "I am under no small obligation to your courage, your promptness, and your agility. But for you, sir, I should now be but a gory mass under the wheels of one of those juggernauts we have ineptly named motor cars."

"I am charmed," said I, "to be of some slight service."

"Slight, sir, slight! Tremendous! Not to me alone, but to civilisation. One who preserves the mind of William George Thomas from extinction deserves well of his fellow men. May I inquire your name, young sir, so that I may preserve it, not only upon the tablets of my memory but in the records which will one day be given to the world as the story of my life?"

"My name," said I, "is Thomas Alva Edison Gimp."

"Ah," said he, "there is also a name well deserving the plaudits of his fellow men." His face darkened and became angry.

"Where," he demanded, "is that Ethiopian to whom I entrusted my life? Where is that beast of burden whose duty it was to propel me in this chair, using more than ordinary care to see to it that I came to no harm? I shall castigate him. Then I shall discharge him. But first I shall pelt him with hard words. I shall bombard him with parts of speech and choice epithets."

I looked about me. There was no colored man in sight.

"He seems," said I, "to have fled."

"Well for him," said Mr. William George Thomas. "I would have burst his eardrums with such a selection of hard wurds as no human ear could endure . . . But that, young sir, leaves me marooned. It is true that I can make some shift at walking, but for no considerable distance, and then reluctantly. Never could I reach the refuge of my hotel. What am I to do?"

"Why," I responded, "I fancy I can make shift to propel you to your destination."

"It is far too much to ask. Too menial a labor to require."

"Nonsense," I said briskly. "Necessity draws no such fine distinctions. Let us proceed."

He made no further protest. As we walked, he questioned me in that unforgettably musical voice.

"Young sir," he asked, "forgive an inquisitive mind for prying. What is your occupation?"

"I am," said I, "a physicist."

"Ah, a man of scientific attainments. As for me, I do not create. I do not invent. I do not produce. My vocation is to observe, to collate, to draw philosophic conclusions. I study my fellow men, their strength, their weaknesses, their foibles, their failures, and their accomplishments. Sir, my admiration for the human species is negligible, if not to say nonexistent."

He paused an instant. "Where" he asked, "do you put to use your undoubted genius?"

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SPY AND COUNTERSPY

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"My present place of research," said I, "is White Sands."

"Where," said he, "men employ themselves in devising terrible engines for their own destruction."

"We venture to hope," said I, "the destruction will be for our enemies."

"Enemies are men," said he didactically. "To destroy a man is to destroy one of yourselves. I do not mean to speak severely nor critically. You are in the mode. It is the style to invent slaughter. Perhaps you are correct. Perhaps you are solvers of the great problem."

"What," I asked, "is the great problem?"

"To avert the disaster of an unbalanced nature where men shall reproduce themselves to a point where they bring the end of the world by the unsupportable weight of their own multitudes."

We were now in the brightly lighted area of the city. Before us loomed the bulk of a great hotel.

"This," said William George Thomas, "is my temporary habitation. If you will summon bellboys, porters, men of bone and sinew, they will relieve you of my inert bulk." His ogre face distorted itself into what I took to be a smile.

"May I hope, young sir, that your graciousness will impel you to bestow upon me the boon of your conversation at no distant day? Perhaps I shall learn how to express my gratitude by actions rather than words."

"It will be a pleasure to converse with you, Mr. Thomas," said I sincerely, for in spite of his repulsive carcass I found something about him to attract me.

I bade him good night and reached my small apartment without further interruption.

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I found the morning ride to White Sands not unpleasant. The bus was comfortably filled with civilian employees, among whom was Miss Brown. I was careful to take a seat at some distance from her because I did not wish my thoughts interrupted by her chatter.

She waved to me as if I were a familiar acquaintance. I responded by a decorous nod.

Upon my arrival I found that the general desired me to call upon him, which I proceeded to do in his office in post headquarters. I was admitted and presented after a short wait.

The general was a dignified, spare man. He received me cordially, rising and extending his hand.

"I am glad to have you with us, Dr. Gimp," he said. "Your reputation has preceded you. Have you been made comfortable?"

"Completely," I said, and waited.

"Your work, I take it," said he, "will be mainly concerned with the perfecting of the electronic brain."

"So I understand," said I.

"There are," he said with some displeasure, "sceptical people. Only last week there arrived a deputation of Congressmen who seemed more interested in harrying me than in satisfying themselves of our gratifying progress."

"Indeed!" said I.

"I assured them," the general said, "that we were reaching a point where the defence of this country from invasion by air was positive through the use of guided missiles."

"I am glad to hear that, sir," I responded, however, with a feeling that he was too optimistic.

"In this," said he— "in our progress toward the perfection of the electronic brain—I have reason to believe we are ahead of the rest of the world. Think of it, sir. I know that the Soviets would give millions of dollars to possess one of our electronic intelligences!"

"Doubtless," said I.

"To permit one of these miracles to fall into their hands would be equivalent to a crushing defeat on the battlefield."

"In which case," said I, "it behoves us to see to it that they do not steal one."

"Doctor Gimp," he said, "I am informed that there exists a determined effort to effect such a theft; that skilful and determined and dangerous agents have been charged with that mission. You are one who will be working upon the further improvement of this brain. You will be near it; it will be, in a sense, in your possession. Therefore I considered it imperative that I should warn you."

"I am a scientist. I work in a laboratory. It is, it seems to me, the duty of experts in the prevention of crime to protect the electronic brain and those who have it in direct charge."

"Nevertheless," said he, "you must be constantly vigilant. Doctor, it may be you whom these secret agents have chosen as the weak spot in our defences. You will act accordingly." He arose, extended his hand again and smiled. "Good morning to you, Doctor," he said.

THE remainder of the day passed principally in settling myself into my new surroundings, acquainting myself with the equipment and facilities of the laboratory. I was pleased. There seemed to be nothing lacking.

At the end of the afternoon I took the bus to El Paso. I was among the first to board the vehicle, and hoped that it would not be so crowded that I could not have a seat to myself. In this I was disappointed, for no sooner had I seated myself than someone dropped into the seat beside me. It was a woman.

I did not turn my head, but presently a voice tinged with irony said, "It's all right to look now, prodigy. I'm decent." The voice was the voice of Miss Brown.

"I had hoped," said I, "to have an undisturbed trip to El Paso."

"You haven't," she said, "learned even the rudiments of what it means to be disturbed."

"Why," I asked, "do you draw that conclusion?"

"Pure logic," she answered. "Nobody—but nobody—knows what it is to be in a turmoil until I enter his life."

"You have not entered my life," I informed her.

"So? Have you ever met a poltergeist?"

"I have not done so," said I, "nor do I place credence in the existence of such psychic manifestations."

"I," she said, "am a female poltergeist. Almost professionally. I've made a study of it."

"Why," I asked, "do you call me prodigy?"

"Why," she countered, "do you call a chimpanzee a chimpanzee? Because," she answered her own question, "it is a chimpanzee."

As I hesitated, wordless, she added, "what you need, Dr. Gimp, is a dose of something to eliminate your repressions."

"This bickering," said I, "is bootless."

"You started it!" she snapped. Suddenly her manner changed and her eyes concentrated upon something at a distance.

"See those mountains?" she asked.

"The Organs?" I asked.

"Right. Here we have an area forty miles by a hundred which, for security and other reasons, has been swept clean of inhabitants. Everybody inside is Army, Navy, Air Force, or civilian employee of the project."

"A proper precaution," I said.

"But with an exception," she told me.

"What is this exception?"

"Two prospectors or miners, or whatever, working in a hole up there. For some reason they were allowed to stay."

"Doubtless a sufficient reason to those in authority."

"A raincoat," she said, "isn't waterproof if it has one tiny hole in it. So," she said, frowning, "I wonder about those prospectors."

"Leave security matters to Major Van Tuyl," I advised her.

"All the same," she said, "they bother me."

"Did you ever see them?" I asked.

"Once, on the road. They looked like two animated clumps of whiskers. Anything," she added after a pause, "can lurk in a thicket of beard."

"Doubtless," I replied, "Major Van Tuyl has combed those whiskers."

"Probably," she said unhappily. Then again her mood changed and she became rather like a little girl asking a favor of an elderly uncle. "But you will," she said unexpectedly, "take me to dinner tonight?"

I hesitated.

"If you're broke," she said, "I'll pay. But!"—her voice was low, almost inaudible— "I need company tonight."

I was somehow moved. There was something about her. I had no desire to accompany her to dinner or to spend the evening in her society, but I found myself unable to refuse her plea. For it was a plea.

"Very well," said I, "if it will please you."

"I'll wear my nicest gown," she said.

"That is of no consequence," said I.

"Upon that point," she said, returning to character, "you may change your mind."

In an hour, having shaved and put on my best blue suit, I called for Miss Brown at her apartment. A young woman opened the door to me.

"I," said I, "am calling for Miss Brown."

"Present and accounted for," said she.

I stared in unmannerly surprise. My scrutiny assured me that it was indeed she, but I could scarcely credit my eyes. Miss Brown, as I knew her, had been rather a nondescript person, quite unworthy of notice. She had been not exactly dowdy, but dressed rather for work than for embellishment.

Her hair was quite transformed. I had given no consideration to her physical structure, but as she stood there waiting for me to enter, I saw that it would compare favorably with that of Miss du Gueslin, though less flamboyant. I was compelled to admit that, to a man interested in such considerations, she would be exceedingly attractive.

"Don't stand there batting your eyes," she said testily.

"A quite remarkable metamorphosis," I said.

"Not," she responded, "when you have the raw material to work with."

"Even," said I, still in a state of surprise, "creditable ankles."

"And," said she, lifting her skirt a trifle, "legs to go with them . . . Shall we go?"

"Have you a place in mind?"

"Leave it to me," she said.

Upon entering the place of her choice I noted, and not with a feeling of dissatisfaction, that heads turned to watch her progress as we were conducted to our table.

"You arouse admiration," said I.

"Oh, that!" she said carelessly. "I'm used to it. I'm lulled to sleep with wolf whistles." As we sat down she regarded me critically and nodded. "You're not so repulsive yourself," she told me.

We gave our orders to the waiter, and while he was bringing cocktails I glanced around the room. My eyes came to rest upon a familiar face—that

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of a gentleman seated on a stool at the bar.

"Ouch!" exclaimed Miss Brown in a dismayed voice.

"What is it?" I asked.

"I hope he's cold sober," she said. "The man at the bar yonder."

"Do you," I asked, "refer to Balthasar Toledo?"

"You know him?"

"I met him once," said I.

Just then Balthasar Toledo espied us and came determinedly in our direction. His extraordinarily handsome face was sullen. He walked with intention to our table and stood over it, glowering.

"You refused to dine with me tonight," he said angrily.

"I was engaged," Miss Brown said. "As you can see . . . Dr. Gimp, Mr. Toledo."

"I've met the laboratory fiend," Toledo said. Apparently it was his intention to be offensive. He reached for Miss Brown's arm imperatively. "Dance," he commanded.

She did not look at me appealingly, doubtless fearing I would be inadequate to the minor emergency. I am not accustomed to such contretemps, but I determined to rely upon instinct.

"Miss Brown," I asked, "do you wish to dance with this gentleman?"

"Decidedly not," she responded with spirit.

I looked up at Toledo mildly as he towered over us. "Miss Brown does not choose to dance with you," I informed him. "Doubtless for many reasons. The chief of which undoubtedly is your state of inebriation. The second of which could well be your atrociously barbarous manners. The third, in which I concur, could be that she does not like you. You will, therefore, withdraw."

"Keep your pedantic snout out of this, Gimp," he said challengingly, and reached again for Miss Brown's arm.

Ordinary efficiency dictated that I place myself on equal terms with him by arising to my feet. He drew back his right fist to strike me. Now, my instructors provided by my mother in the art of fisticuffs had informed me of the impropriety of leading with the right. It provides the opponent with a coveted opportunity. It seemed essential that I avail myself of the opportunity thus offered, which I did.

I have been informed in the gymnasium that my left is quite effective. The truth of this became evident. Doubtless it was more effective than in ordinary circumstances because I was deeply offended at the man and resentful. Be that as it may, the blow landed flush and solid, and Mr. Toledo landed upon his shoulders and skidded under an adjoining table.

Miss Brown stood up, pumping her graceful arm and counting, a proceeding that I did not understand. She counted up to ten. Then she lifted my arm and announced, "The winner and new champion."

"A distasteful episode," I said in distress.

I bent over Toledo, hopeful that he had taken no serious injury.

"Make him say 'uncle,'" she said softly.

I stood erect and stared down upon her. She was grinning impishly. A chord in my memory had been twanged by her words. I was taken back years, to a day when I was being chased home by a boy who bullied me, and to a little girl hanging over her fence.

"You," I said, "are the little fat girl."

"I've thinned out," she said.

"Your name was—was——" She waited while I racked my brain. "——was Melinna," I said triumphantly.

"My first name," she said, "is Melinna. It always will be. My last name is Brown. That is subject to change."

Before we could comment further upon this incredible reunion or of my recognition that it was a reunion, Mr. Toledo was reactivated. He got to his feet, not steadily, and scowled at me. He seemed now to have become sobered. His handsome face was distorted by rage, but he made no offensive move.

"If," he said harshly, "you weren't more valuable alive than dead, I'd break your back across my knee." Whereupon he strode away and vanished into the street.

In the laboratory next day, I was annoyed to find my concentration broken. My mind insisted upon deserting the problem under consideration and disporting itself among unprofitable reflections.

As, for instance, the metamorphosis in Miss Brown, the fact that she was, indeed, the fat little girl Melinna who had commanded me to fight my tormentor, and the coincidence that last night she had involved me in physical combat with the man Balthasar Toledo.

Long experience with mental processes has taught me that when the mind rebels as mine was rebelling, the most efficient method of inducing it to return to its work is either to lie prone, endeavor to clear the mind of all activity, and to think of nothing whatever for a time, or to go for a brisk walk.

I determined upon the latter course. So I put on my hat and went out in the long corridor. Before I had proceeded half-way to the building's entrance, guarded by a uniformed man armed with a great pistol, I encountered Miss Brown.

"I was coming to your office," she said.

"I," said I, "am going for a walk to clear my mind."

"Mine needs a spot of clearing, too," she said.

"I am walking alone," I replied.

"The mind won't behave. Is that it? Rubbish litters the path of ratiocination." She grinned at me boyishly. "I'm a first-rate rubbish clearer . . . Wait till I get my hat."

It was useless to protest. In a moment she returned, and together we left the building.

"Ho, for the wide open spaces!" she said gaily.

I WAS morose. I could feel her eyeing me slantwise with calculation, and unconsciously I became aware that her dressing was less formal than usual. Evidently she considered silence the course of wisdom, so we walked side by side without spoken word.

We walked westward to Third Street, and then turned northward past the Naval Missile Assembly Building, on beyond the Navy Technical Laboratory, and after a time westward again into the desert itself.

We were walking on the sand now, seeking a path amid the greasewood and cacti and proceeding towards the distant Organ Mountains. We had walked a mile, perhaps, and Miss Brown had maintained a silence which, somehow, was companionable. She did not intrude herself, but, strangely, I found her mere presence salubrious.

We scrambled into and out of a gully and stood upon the brink of another. There we paused for breath.

Idly my eyes moved about the desolation, and then suddenly were held by an object some fifty yards to our right in the arroyo. It was hidden by a growth of desert shrubs. Startlingly, a great bird, a buzzard, took flight from the spot.

"Ugh!" exclaimed Miss Brown in revulsion.

"I think," said I, "you had better stay here."

She was staring at the spot from which the foul bird had risen.

"Isn't that—isn't that a human foot?" she asked tremulously.

"I will investigate," said I.

I descended into the arroyo and walked forward. As I approached it became certain that a human foot, bare, protruded from the clump. I arrived at the spot, nor did I need to part the bushes to see, stretched upon its face, the body of a man, naked as the day he was born. It was apparent that he was dead. His face was visible in profile.

Miss Brown was at my side. She did not gasp or cry out.

"This," said I severely, "is no sight for you."

I bent over the man, fighting a squeamishness in my stomach. There was a great wound disfiguring his temple.

"Shot," said Miss Brown. "I'd guess with a rifle."

The body was that of a man past middle age, scrawny but wiry and well-muscled. Although his body was white, his face and arms were leather tanned by wind and sun.

"Odd," said Miss Brown.

"Tragic," I corrected her.

"I mean his chin and upper lip and cheeks," she said.

Undoubtedly their condition was peculiar. Although the forehead and nose and upper cheeks were the color of mahogany, the chin, the upper lip, the lower cheeks were of a much lighter shade, as if they had been protected from the burning rays of the desert sun. The man had been newly shaven!

"Obviously," said I, "he was bearded."

Something else troubled me about the face—the skin. There were two or three little slashes, as if the razor with which he had been shaved had been unskillfully applied. There was one sizeable cut near the ear. It had not bled. There was no clotting.

"What is it?" Miss Brown asked, noting that I was startled.

"I believe," said I, "the man was shaved after he was dead."

"Gruesome," she whispered.

"One," said I, "would not go about the grisly business of shaving a corpse unless under strong compulsion."

"Or," she said, "stripping him of his clothes."

I noted her fortitude and firm control of her emotions with approval.

"The reason for the shaving and stripping," said I, "could be to conceal his identity."

"Go to the head of the class," she responded.

"He was carried here from some remote spot."

"Maybe not so remote," she said. She started to move past the body and up the steep bank.

"No," said I, "don't scramble about. You might obliterate some telltale sign."

"Correct," she said, and became motionless.

"This," I said upon reflection, "is Major Van Tuyl's business. He should be notified forthwith."

"Somebody," she said with bent brows, "got through his patrols. But anybody could. You can't police a vast, wild area like the proving ground. All you can hope is to keep intruders from reaching the heart of it."

"Can you," I asked, "find your way back?"

"Of course."

"I will remain here," said I. "You will notify Major Van Tuyl."

"Stand on a rise," she said, "so you

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will be visible. Without a guide, one might search for this spot for a week."

"Right," I assured her. "Make all possible haste."

She took a final glance at me and then turned toward her destination. It was lonesome there with nothing but the body of a murdered man for company.

Some time elapsed before a jeep came lurching over the terrain. It contained Major Van Tuyl, a sergeant and an enlisted man, with Miss Brown crowded into the back seat.

"She insisted upon coming," Van Tuyl said.

"I am not amazed," I replied.

He eyed me and I could not tell whether it was with approval or disapproval.

"Things light on you, Doctor Gimp," he said. "Things happen to you. You're a top-flight corpse finder."

"Quite fortuitously," I said.

"There are people like that. Carriers," he said tersely. "I guess maybe we made a good selection."

"Tell the major what you think," said Miss Brown.

"I think," I said to the major, "that he was shaved after death."

"Why?"

"Examine the razor cuts on his face. Some time after death."

He bent over the body and then regarded me quizzically. "A detective!" he said.

"A scientist," said I stiffly, "who observes phenomena and draws conclusions."

"Keep your highly educated shirt on," he retorted. Then he grinned. "We might have missed it," he admitted. "Do you know, with any luck this body would never have been found. In a few days there would have been nothing but bones." He pointed upward at soaring specks in the sky. "They'd have taken care of that." He walked away and in a wide circle around the spot.

"Must have dropped him from the air," he said with disappointment. "No trail. Hard surface around here. . . . I hear you pack a pretty punch," he said.

"News travels," I said.

"Bop!" exclaimed Miss Brown, striking her left palm smartly with her right fist. "One-punch Gimp."

"You never can tell to look at them," said the major. "I had an uncle that drove screws with a hammer."

"A ridiculous thing to do," I told him.

"He liked short cuts," the major said with a shrug. "See this body?"

"Certainly."

"Maybe," he said, "it got to be a body by taking a poke at the wrong man, at the wrong time. Now you and Miss Brown better run along. You've done your good deed for the day. We'll try to handle the detecting from here. We get paid for it."

We withdrew and trudged back to the laboratory.

"What did he mean by saying you're a top-flight corpse finder?" she asked.

"I," said I, "found another one on the train. But that one had his clothes on."

"You improve as you go along," she said. "Maybe the next one will be painted blue."

"It is not," said I severely, "a joking matter."

"At the moment," she said, "I need a spot of comedy relief."

"The man Balthasar Toledo," I said, "was on the same train."

"So what?" she asked.

"So nothing," I said shortly. "It was only a fugitive recollection. He's an art expert," I added.

"He thinks," said Miss Brown, "he's a woman expert. I detest beautiful men." She stood back and regarded me solemnly. "No," she said, "even a doting parent couldn't accuse you of that. . . . If we hustle moderately we'll be able to catch the bus to town."

We made sufficient haste and rode in together. "By the way," she said as we took our seats, "I think a combination of a knockout punch and a naked corpse put us on a first-name basis. You may call me Melinna."

.

The next several days were peaceful and I was able to concentrate upon my work in office and laboratory. It was on a Thursday night that I found, upon my return to my apartment in El Paso, a note awaiting me. It was signed "Renee du Guesclin."

"Dear Doctor Gimp," it said. "It will please me if you will call upon me this evening. I shall be at home at eight o'clock."

It was brief and gave no reason for the invitation. For a time my inclination was to ignore it, but Miss du Guesclin was a woman of a variety I never had encountered before, and she aroused my curiosity. There was also the point that she was equipped with the sort of beauty which is difficult to ignore.

I recognised my desire to see her as, possibly, a weakness. Nevertheless, I surrendered to it, so that promptly at eight o'clock I rang her doorbell.

MISS DU GUESCLIN herself admitted me, clad in a garment which I recalled vaguely was called a hostess gown. It was not a reticent gown. It emphasised rather than minimised the physical endowments of the individual who wore it. It was, I admit, somewhat exciting.

She extended a lovely hand and smiled up at me in a most charming manner.

"It was so nice of you to come," she said. "You think me forward to ask you, no?"

"No," I answered.

We entered the comfortable parlor and, uneasily, I wondered what we would find to talk about. I have no aptitude for social conversation or, indeed, for any conversation that is not within the limits of my professional horizon. But Miss du Guesclin seemed to feel no such shortcoming. She chattered in such a manner that I presently found myself talking to her fluently and without self-consciousness.

She was graceful as a kitten. Her gestures and movements were unstudied. She seemed quite unaware of the fact that each time she stirred it served to bring to the attention some new feature of her physical perfection.

The conversation had been confined to trivialities. She had a bright, quick mind, but nothing so far indicated any depth of intelligence.

"Have you," I inquired, "any compelling interest such as my own devotion to the science of electronics?"

"Oh, but yes, yes," she said quickly. "I am interested in being alive."

"That," said I, "is not a profession, not even an avocation."

"I do not need a profession. With a profession one earns money. I do not need to earn money. Avocation—maybe I do not understand that word. But maybe it is like when one collects the postage stamp, or breeds fine horses, or becomes involved in politics. Yes? As you say, a hobby?"

"In effect," I answered.

"No. Yet I have no hobby, no avocation. But I know what it will be. Someday—I hope soon—I will have such a hobby."

"Of what nature?" I asked.

"Being in love," she said. She made the statement very naturally and seriously.

"Being in love," said I, "is not a thing one thinks about as a hobby, but rather as an emotion having its roots in biology."

"Oh, poof!" she exclaimed. "To a woman like me," she said, "being in love is a business, an avocation, a profession, a hobby. It is everything. Behol," she said firmly, "you create a great rocket. It is to rush through the air at great speed and to explode among the enemy. That is its business. So, nature create the woman for one purpose—to reach the destination and explode in love."

It was an utterly absurd comparison, repulsive alike to logic and to fact.

"I have never thought of love as an explosive," I said.

"Then you do not know. Especially you do not know me. With me it will be so. Not gentle. Not the little pop of a cap pistol. But like what you call the chain reaction of the splitting of the atom."

"I fear, Miss du Guesclin," said I, "that you are fated to disappointment."

"There will be no disappointment—not for me nor for the man who has my love."

I was ill at ease. It did not seem to me that this topic was a seemly one for social chit-chat. But Miss du Guesclin was quite uninhibited.

During my call I had occupied a comfortable sofa against the wall. Miss du Guesclin had been curled in a big chair. Now she casually stepped to an occasional table, selected a cigarette, and then, in a quite natural manner, seated herself beside me. She had anointed herself with a perfume which was far from obtrusive, but which was not without its effect upon the senses.

I found that the room had become unexpectedly warm, and there was a dryness which caused me to dampen my lips. Her head rested against the upholstery of the sofa, her lower limbs were drawn up under her, and she looked up at me in a cunning manner through half-closed lids.

I had no means of knowing with certainty, but the thought came to me that she would not be resentful if I placed my arm about her shoulders. I might, indeed, have surrendered to this impulse had there not come the interruption of the ringing of the doorbell.

Miss du Guesclin exhibited disgruntlement.

She ejaculated sharply, and for an instant her face was not that of a charming young woman, but rather of a woman capable of ruthless efficiency, furious at being thwarted in some intention.

She drew her skirt about her and walked angrily to the door, which she jerked open in temper. When she saw who stood there her shoulders twitched as though at some minor shock and she stood rigid and wordless.

A soft cultured voice which I recognised at once became audible.

"Miss du Guesclin, is it not?" asked Mr. William George Thomas.

"I am Miss du Guesclin."

"I should be desolated," said Mr. Thomas, "to find that I have called at an inopportune moment."

He did not hesitate for an answer, but advanced, avalanche-like, into the room, so that she retreated before his elephantine bulk. He closed the door behind him.

"My dear mademoiselle," he said in his beautiful musical speaking voice, "we have mutual friends, friends who have asked me to convey to you their

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affection. Friends who, feeling that I might be of some slight service, have troubled themselves to send to me a letter addressed to you, bespeaking a friendly reception of myself. My name is William George Thomas."

With a manner of some grandeur he extended to her an envelope, which she took mechanically. His great, somewhat protruding eyes perceived my presence, and he bowed ponderously.

"Ah, Doctor Gimp! I have indeed intruded."

"Not at all," said I. This was true. I was relieved rather than otherwise by his arrival. It was opportune. It extricated me from a dilemma, possibly rescued me from a manifestation of my own weakness.

"May I be seated?" he said. "For obvious reasons I find standing or walking irksome." He smiled at me. "I have secured," he said, "a more reliable propellant for my wheelchair—this time a beast of burden who will not permit me to catapult down declivities."

He lowered himself into a chair. Miss du Guesclin had opened the envelope and was reading its contents. There was a look in her eyes; there was tension in her posture.

"May I venture to hope," said Mr. Thomas, "that the note of introduction assures me a certain tentative degree of welcome?"

"It ees a note," she said, smiling mechanically, "which cannot be ignored".

I thought this a curious locution, implying rather impulsion than warmth of welcome. He regarded her blandly and then turned to me, speaking in humorous vein: "And you, doctor, have you perfected today a rocket upon which one may ride in luxury to the moon?"

It was in the same light manner that I replied. "We have not yet," said I, "commenced to recruit beautiful stewardesses for that flight."

"Ah," said he, "a lightly tripping wit! Admirable. One does not expect the gayer bon mot from the brain engrossed in science. You improve, sir, you improve upon acquaintance." He clasped his enormous hands across his monstrous stomach.

"Sir," he assured me, "I shall cultivate you. I shall woo your friendship. I shall sue for your delightful companionship."

Miss du Guesclin resumed her seat upon the sofa beside me, but the spell was broken. I was no longer bedazzled, nor did she seem now interested in plying me with allurements. On the contrary, she was sullen, eyeing Mr. Thomas with a mingling of resentment and what I took to be apprehension.

"Miss du Guesclin," said he with practised graciousness, "you far exceed, far surpass, and excel the glamorous reports that came to me of your loveliness and your charm." He beamed. "Ah, were I a younger man, as is the doctor, I would succumb with minimum struggles. Even as I am, somewhat weighted with flesh and years, I am far from impervious."

"Mr. Thomas," she said coldly, "I am not in the mood for compliments."

"And for what, dear mademoiselle, are you in the mood?"

"For bed," she said shortly.

She sat moodily, crumpling in her hand the note and envelope Mr. Thomas had handed her upon his arrival. She crumpled and compressed them until they were two little balls of paper enclosed in her fist.

"The dictates of decorum," said Mr. Thomas graciously, "forbid that an initial call, one purely of introduction, should be unduly extended. It matters not how strong the temptation . . . Dr. Gimp, I find it difficult to arise from a chair without some assistance. Your hand, if you please."

The touch of his flabby hand was unpleasant, but I endured it, bracing myself as his weight caused me to exert all my strength. He stood, beaming at Miss du Guesclin and myself.

Miss du Guesclin looked up at me with eyes half closed. Her lips were compressed. There was nothing soft and yielding about her now. There were traces of, perhaps, grimness.

"You will come again soon, doctor," she said almost defiantly.

I knew that I would come again. In spite of a subconscious warning that it might be best for me to eliminate Miss du Guesclin from my orbit, I knew that I would find it very difficult not to come again.

"Assuredly," I told her.

William George Thomas lumbered to the door and opened it. He bowed from the waist to Miss du Guesclin. He was suave, gracious, kindly.

"I regret," he said, "if my call was untimely. I blunder. I am inept."

I flatter myself that I am a shrewd judge of men. I was certain that if there was a thing which Mr. Thomas definitely was not, it was inept. I had a feeling that he had timed his call efficiently, and had a purpose.

From the moment of his coming there had been tension in the room. His manner had been courtly, but something underlay that manner, something of the cat-and-mouse variety. I was pleased that I had been able to detect it.

"Good-night, Miss du Guesclin," I said. "Thank you for a charming evening."

"It was charming, wasn't it?" she asked. She seemed to accent the past tense.

"Your arm, please, doctor," said Mr. Thomas. "My equilibrium is not of the steadiest when I descend steps. It is a rare pleasure to have met you, Miss du Guesclin."

I steadied him down the steps. On the walk his wheel-chair awaited us. This time it was not a Negro who supplied the motive power, but a broad-shouldered Mexican.

LABORIOUSLY Mr. Thomas ensconced himself in the vehicle. "Do our paths coincide?" he asked.

"For a part of the way," I answered.

We proceeded a hundred feet in silence. Then he said politely, his musical voice casual, "Will you be so gracious, Dr. Gimp, as to feel in the right-hand pocket of your jacket? An odd request, eh? But I am a man of whims. Will it astound you to find that you have a ball of paper in the pocket?"

"A ball of paper?"

"A slight thing—a thing of the size of a ping-pong ball and almost as imponderable."

I fumbled in the designated pocket and was surprised when my fingers encountered paper; not one ball, but two.

"Miss du Guesclin, doubtless in an absent-minded moment, placed in your pocket—in a moment of embarrassment, shall we say"—he smiled broadly—"my letter of introduction to the young lady."

Miss du Guesclin had surreptitiously slipped envelope and letter into my pocket. She was not one to do such a thing absent-mindedly or automatically in a moment of embarrassment. If she had concealed the balls of paper in my pocket, it had been with deliberate intention and for a purpose.

For some reason Miss du Guesclin had desired me to find those balls of paper. Had I done so, curiosity would have moved me to examine them. It had been her desire that I read the note of introduction; why, I could not imagine.

"If you please," said Mr. Thomas, extending his fleshy hand.

It is a valuable thing to have a trained mind—one capable of reacting promptly to the call of emergency. Some importance must attach itself to the note. Mr. Thomas had mentioned one ball of paper when there were two. I could, of course, decline to give him what he asked for, but, ostensibly, there was no cogent reason for doing so.

But one thing I could do: I could give him one ball of paper, retaining the other. The chances were even that it would be the envelope I returned to him, and not the note. I resolved to leave the matter to chance. Without exhibiting reluctance, I pulled out a ball of paper and handed it to Mr. Thomas.

He took a lighter from his pocket, ignited the paper, holding it in his fingers until it burst into flame, and then tossed it to the walk, watching it until it was consumed.

We walked together a couple of blocks, he chatting agreeably and I responding appropriately.

"I turn here," said I.

"Pleasant dreams, doctor," he said affably.

"Restful sleep to you," I rejoined.

I walked briskly to my apartment house and entered my rooms. When I had pressed the button illuminating the little parlor, I took from my pocket the second ball of paper, deeply curious to discover if chance had smiled upon me. I straightened the sheet.

It was not the envelope, but the note. Upon it was brief writing, not addressed to Miss du Guesclin nor signed by any person. It contained but three words: "Stop! Look! Listen!" it said.

A command and a warning! Not a note of introduction, but an imperative and a caution.

The first questions that occurred to me were: Did William George Thomas present himself and deliver this cryptic note because I was calling upon Miss du Guesclin? Was it to interrupt that visit and to give the young lady a directive as to her behaviour toward myself?

My thoughts turned to Major Van Tuyl and my initial conversation with that officer. I asked myself a third question in the terms of that conversation: Had the bleating of the kid attracted the tiger?

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Our task at White Sands was, in effect, to endow a mechanical device with abilities so far restricted to the human brain.

We had attained some success in endowing a jet-propelled rocket with certain of the mental abilities of a hunting dog. We had not utterly failed in our objective to install in an aerial weapon the ability to take to the air and to search out and strike an approaching and threatning enemy aeroplane.

We had made gratifying strides along the road of devising an electronic quasi intelligence to be installed in a missile which was capable of taking into account such matters as alteration of weather and of wind, and of correcting its navigation if outside influences deflected its true flight.

We had reached a point where definitely we would be able to launch

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a rocket in America which would strike in the vicinity of a target thousands of miles away.

Our task was to bring this half brain to a further point of effectiveness. The duty of Major Van Tuyl and his numerous associates was to prevent the enemy from stealing the fruits of our labors.

In the motion-picture room I had been watching on the screen the preparations for flight of a V-2. It stood perpendicular in the arch of a gantry crane while it was made ready for its take-off. The massive structure was moved away, leaving the missile standing on its tail, its nose pointing to the sky.

All was in readiness. A burst of flame flattened out upon the concrete base and the great rocket seemed for an instant to stand still in the air, as if gathering its tremendous forces for titanic effort. Then, as if at word of command, the great mass of metal, held stable by the airfoils at its tail, surged upward under the impulsion of its jet motor. It vanished.

Knuckles sounded on the door and the operator of the projector opened it.

"Is Doctor Gimp here?" a voice asked.

"Here!" I called.

It was Major Van Tuyl, lean and leathery and sharp-featured.

"Fifteen minutes to spare?" he asked.

"Of course," I replied.

We walked down the corridor to my office. He closed the door. I seated myself and he sprawled in a chair.

"Characters light on you," he said. "In words of one syllable, tell me about the fat man."

"William George Thomas," I said.

"We know his name. We can estimate his weight. Deliver a brief lecture on the gentleman."

I described our meeting, the runaway wheelchair and how I had propelled him back to his hotel. I gave the facts of his intrusion during my call upon Miss du Guesclin and his presenting to her a spurious letter of introduction.

I told how Mr. Thomas had seen her secrete the crumpled paper in my pocket and how the fat man had demanded its return to him.

"There were," said I, "two balls of paper, Mr. Thomas' eyes were sharp, but not all-seeing. So I selected one paper wad at random and handed it to him. He burned it and was content. When I arrived at my apartment I examined the remaining one and found that fortune had favored me. It was the note and not the envelope."

"Is the message a tender secret?" he asked.

I extracted the paper from my pocket and handed it to him.

"'Stop! Look! Listen!'" he read. And then, testily, "How long were you going to keep this on ice?"

"Until," I said, "I found time to give it to you. It may be news to you," I said ironically, "but I have work to perform."

"Yeah!" he retorted. And then, "My unworldly and pedantic pal, in this neck of the woods security comes before stratosphere."

I ignored this rebuke. "Who is William George Thomas?" I asked.

"We don't know. He just oozed out from under a damp rock. He didn't exist for us until you started capering with him." His eyes twinkled.

"If he wants to keep on dancing the bunny hug with you, don't give him the cold shoulder. . . . By the way, how much hay did you make with Miss du Guesclin? I use the word 'hay' advisedly."

"Miss du Guesclin," I answered stiffly, "is a creature of sudden impulse and tenuous inhibitions."

"Some people," said he, "have all the luck."

"Have you," I asked, "identified the naked dead man?"

"Probably," he said, "someone dropped from a flying saucer. We're sending his fingerprints to the FBI on Mars. If they have one. So long, Doctor."

The major walked to the door, paused and turned. "Did you," he asked, "ever hear of a femme fatale?"

My surprise at his use of the French language must have shown on my face. He grinned. "You're not the only person who's been exposed to education."

"I never," said I, "heard the phrase femme fatale. What does it signify?"

"It signifies Mademoiselle Renee du Guesclin. You can have a lot of fun with one of them—if you keep your fingers crossed." He grinned again. "Renee will tend to broaden your horizon. Don't neglect her."

And then he was gone.

AFTER lunch, I was closeted for several hours, almost to the hour of the departure of the bus for El Paso, in the exploration of a problem in terrestrial reference guidance, which is a complicated technique of missile control by which the predetermined path set into the control of a missile can be modified by a secondary device which reacts to magnetic or gravitational effects which attract the rocket to its target.

I found Melinna Brown waiting among the group who were to be passengers, and when the conveyance drew up we occupied a seat together. She seemed distrait. My own mind occupied itself with the conversation that had taken place between myself and Major Van Tuyl.

"Miss Brown——" I said.

"Why not 'Melinna'?"

"Very well, Melinna. Will you explain to me the worldly significance of the term 'femme fatale'?"

"A femme fatale," she said, turning to peer at me, "is to a man what flypaper is to a fly. It looks good, it smells good, it tastes good. But when you light on it, you're stuck."

"Ah," said I, and studied her pert face. "By any chance are you a femme fatale?"

"Only," said she demurely, "after office hours. I'm only a part-time one. Why? Are you in the market?"

"I merely was seeking for information."

"On that subject," she said, "you'd better confine your investigations to hearsay. You're not equipped to cope. In fact, you're not equipped to cope with an ordinary hussy. Nor even with a nice girl with ideas."

"Indeed!" I said huffily. No man likes to have his competence belittled.

"Doctor," she said, "you'd be a sitting duck."

"I am not," I said firmly, "so stupidly vulnerable as you believe."

"Double it," she said, "and you'd still be third-string substitute."

She held up her hand to stop me as I was about to retort. She spoke earnestly.

"It's a compliment," she said. "It's the way a decent man should be. Me," she said very firmly, "I wouldn't give house room to a man who could outdicker a femme fatale. I'm all for men who blunder along in a straight line. They're the sort a self-respecting girl can lead to the altar before you can say Jack Robinson and apply beam-rider guidance the rest of his natural life. Which every man needs."

"Cannot a man get through life without riding a radio beam controlled by some woman?"

"No."

"A man's life," I protested, "cannot be directed by electronics."

"If they're female electronics, it can." Her eyes twinkled with mischief. "And he'll find it's just dandy."

It was puzzling. My analytical brain perceived the possibility that she was right. Because I, myself, was conscious of a need, of a lack. In the world of science I was confident of my capacity to carry on, but outside of that sphere—perhaps that narrow sphere—I was not so certain.

As I looked backward I was compelled to admit that in non-scientific matters my mother had been a sort of airfoil, holding me to a certain course. I had relied upon her, permitted her to make decisions and skilfully and diplomatically to impose her wise will. Now that I considered the matter, I saw how she had dominated my father to his benefit.

It was not impossible that nature had ordained that woman should be, in effect, the device by which a man's flight through the stratosphere of life should be dominated and directed. This could be a scientific truth.

"It may be," said I, "that you have stated a hitherto undiscovered law."

"Not so undiscovered," she said. "Eve discovered it in the Garden the day Lilith came prowling around."

"I would like to explore this theorem with you further," I said. "It presents a fruitful field of speculation."

"Well," she replied, "if you want to take me to dinner tonight we can grub around in the fruitful field." She paused. "Some time," she said, "the idea might pop into your head to ask me, instead of my asking you."

"It might, indeed," I answered. "In fact, it has occurred to me."

"I'll rig out in my slickest femme-fatale costume," she said. Then she scrutinised me as if I were a specimen under a microscope. "I sometimes faintly suspect," she said, "that you have a nebulous sense of humor."

"Indeed?" said I. "I assure you my sense of humor is acute."

Our bus was nearing its destination. It stopped and I helped her to the sidewalk.

"In an hour and a half," she said, "it takes time for a girl to put on her femme-fatale ensemble."

"In an hour and a half," I agreed.

I left her to step into a shop for an evening paper. When I emerged I looked up and down the street. A block away I saw Melinna Brown, but not alone. She was walking beside a wheelchair and was in earnest conversation with William George Thomas.

.

I was disturbed. Melinna, rising phoenix-like from the ashes of my past, had been taken for granted by me. She would not occupy the position she did at White Sands unless she had been screened exhaustively by the FBI. Her character, as I had observed it, while tending to flippancy, had impressed me as basically trustworthy.

As I walked home my thoughts were painful, yet I strove to apply logic. I had no reason to hold the fat man in suspicion, except the fact of his intrusion upon myself and Miss du Guesclin, and the cryptic warning he had delivered to her. I had no basis for believing that warning concerned myself, and certainly not just cause to suppose that it was directed against the security precautions at White Sands.

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It might have been personal. It might have arisen from some situation dissociated from the proving ground. Or from the secrecy necessarily surrounding our work with guided missiles.

However, it seemed to me that I was compelled to conduct myself circumspectly until the fat man's part was clarified.

It was in this troubled state of mind that I called for Melinna as arranged. She greeted me with what seemed, to me, to be an innocent satisfaction with her own appearance. The satisfaction was justified.

"Do I answer the specifications?" she asked gaily.

"Specifications for what?" I inquired.

"A femme fatale," she said.

"I wish I knew," I said, not intentionally, but inadvertently, speaking a thought that had better been concealed.

She became grave, reserved, resentful. "What takes place?" she asked, her eyes intent upon my face.

I dissembled—a thing at which I have little skill. I pretended surprise at her question, shaking my head as if to clear it. "I don't understand," I said. "I fear I was distrait."

"What distraited you?" she demanded.

"I was applying Joule's constant to a certain problem with which I have been concerned. That is to say, the mechanical equivalent of heat——"

"You," she said, "are not an artful dodger." She shrugged. "Tonight let's apply the mechanical equivalent of pleasure. I crave Mexican food. How's for hopping across to Juarez? Sometimes it's gay in a dreary sort of way. I crave gaiety."

"To cross the border," I asked, "what formalities does one have to satisfy?"

"Practically none," she answered.

We took a cab to the customs barrier and I found it was true that there were few formalities either to leaving the United States or entering the republic of Mexico. The passage of tourists evidently was encouraged.

Once we had left the area of petty officials, we strolled. To me it was of interest because it was my first visit to our neighboring country. It seemed to be a town of shops purveying souvenirs and other merchandise calculated to catch the eye of the inexperienced.

"Booby traps for the bucolic," Melinna said lightly. "But if you know your way around, you can unearth real values and sometimes real bargains."

She led me hither and yon, and finally into a not too brightly lighted eating place in which was a small dancing floor and an orchestra. The main feature of this musical organisation seemed to be a man who rattled things. In each hand he held a stick at the end of which was a hollow bulb containing loose dry objects. These he jiggled rhythmically.

There were other instruments, notably a guitar, and a young woman with—incredibly—a diamond set in one of her front teeth was singing a song in Spanish.

"The wild duck here," Melinna said, "is heavenly, and the beer!"

We were conducted to a table, and Melinna gave our order in the language of the country.

"You," said I, "are a linguist."

"Like the great Von Moltke," she said pertly, "I can keep silent in eight languages."

"I never," said I, "have heard you keep silent even in one."

The restaurant was comfortably filled for the most part with Americans enjoying an evening in Old Mexico. Our food arrived; it was, if not heavenly, as Melinna had described it, certainly delicious.

Soon after we had entered and seated ourselves, I saw a young man, unmistakably of the country, who came in alone and was shown to a table at our right. He was handsome, his movements were graceful — and somehow familiar. I was certain I never had seen him before, but he touched some chord in my memory.

Then suddenly, I knew whom he resembled. It was rather startling, that resemblance. He was the counterpart of that Senor Iturbe with whom I had dined on the train, and whose body I had so unpleasantly discovered subsequently.

We had finished the main part of our repast when this young gentleman arose, walked toward us and halted beside my chair. He bowed with grave courtesy.

"Excuse," he said politely.

"Certainly," I responded.

"It is the Senor Gimp?" he said.

"That," said I, "is my name."

"I am Ramon Iturbe," he said. "The name, it could be, is to you familiar?"

"It is, indeed," I answered.

"May I," he asked, "intrude myself to take a seat?" He glanced at Melinna then, but not with especial interest.

I AROSE and motioned to a chair. "Miss Brown," I said, "may I present the Senor Iturbe?"

"Charmed," she said.

"That other one of the train," said Iturbe, "was to me the twin."

"The resemblance is remarkable," I observed.

"It ees gracious of the Senor Gimp and his so lofely companion to visit my country."

I frowned. "I take it," said I, "that your coming to this restaurant was not accidental?"

"I," he responded, "am of the Policia Judicial Federal de los Territorios."

"Then this call is official," I said.

"Not so. It is personal." He paused and his brown eyes gleamed. "Someone has kill my brother. I seek that one, not official. I seek him because of the love I have for my brother."

"To take the law," I said, reprovingly, "into your own hands."

"It iss—how do you say?—an obligation of family. My brother, Juan, also serves the state. But in another part of the Departamento de Seguridad Publica. I am of the criminal investigations. He is of the branch Policia Federal de Seguridad. Which deal with enemies of the state, with those who are subversive."

"Your brother was returning, then, from some official errand?"

"What, I do not know. It was disclose to me that he make the journey to Washington—to speak with your FBI. It is in my mind that he return with knowledge that someone feared. With thees facts that must not reach his superiors."

Melinna sat silent and rigid. She missed no word.

"It is you, senor, who are on that train. It is you who make the bad discovery of my brother."

"True," I answered.

"So," he said intently, "I ask you to describe thees affair."

"Senor Iturbe," I answered, "I should be glad to give you all the information I possess. But I have been forbidden to talk."

"To Juan's brother?" he asked.

"To anyone," said I.

"But," he protested, "I am of the policia of a friendly nation."

"But you question me," said I, "not in your official capacity, but—er—as a personal avenger."

"What would you?" he asked simply.

"I never," said I, "have had a twin brother. I do not know how I would react if he were murdered."

"Our blood is different," he said gravely. "Our obligations of family are not the same. Perhaps you of the United States leave all to the law and are content. It cannot be so with me."

"That," said I, "I am in a measure able to comprehend."

At that moment the double doors of the cafe were thrust wide and William George Thomas, in his wheelchair, was trundled into the room. Melinna Brown's back was toward the entrance, as she could not see the arrival. At that instant the evening died for me. I was suddenly heartsick. To a logical mind such as mine, this could be no coincidence, but an arrangement. Melinna had brought me here and had arranged with William George Thomas to see that I would be present.

"Melinna," I said, striving to control my voice, "your friend, Mr. Thomas, has just arrived."

Iturbe shot a keen glance from me to Melinna. There was uncomfortable tension at our table.

"My friend Mr. Thomas?" Melinna asked.

"Who met you at the bus tonight," I said.

Suddenly her eyes crinkled and she grinned impishly. "I like my men well cushioned," she said.

"Are you being evasive?" I asked accusingly.

"Oh definitely," she answered.

Iturbe was staring fixedly at the fat man. "Not," said he slowly, "a senor easily to be forgotten."

"His presence in Mexico," said I, "might be of interest to the Policia Judicial Federal de los Territorios."

"For what reason?" he asked.

"I haven't the remotest idea," said I, "nevertheless, that is my opinion."

"An opinion," said Senor Iturbe, with an old-world bow, "to which a wise man should affix the attention."

Melinna continued to regard me mischievously. After her first reaction to the arrival of William George Thomas, she seemed to think the whole matter was humorous.

"Hang on to your Q-factor," she said. "It's running wild."

Perhaps my ratio of energy stored to energy dissipated was, as she thus hinted, out of balance. But I had recently been subjected to so many shocks that my normally conservative, perhaps plodding, habit of mind and action was rendered unstable.

"Young lady," I said severely, "this is no moment for flippancy."

"It's no moment for conclusion-hopping," she retorted. She turned smilingly to Senor Iturbe.

"Really," she said, as he returned her smile, "the doctor, in his normal state, is quite entertaining." She turned back to me. "Do we invite Senor Iturbe to join us in a liqueur?"

"At the moment," I said, "I am thinking of Mr. Thomas."

"Can we not," asked Senor Iturbe, "warm ourselves with brandy while we discuss this—what do you say?—this so gross, so repulsive mountain of flesh?"

He motioned to a waiter.

"Our bickering," said Melinna, "must irk the senor."

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"He who listens learns," Senor Iturbe observed sententiously.

The eyes of William George Thomas were observing us over his balloon cheeks. He waved his hand in greeting, then motioned to the man who supplied his motive power to roll his chair toward our table.

"The learned doctor!" he exclaimed. "And in what delectable company! Visiting foreign soil on his lawful occasions. Educational. May I, perhaps," he asked in his musical voice, "dare to beg to be presented to the so alluring lady? And to this gentleman, who, I deduce, is indigenous to the soil?"

"I doubt," I replied austerely, "that an introduction to Miss Brown is necessary. This gentleman, Mr. Thomas, is Senor Iturbe, an operative of Policia Judicial de los Territorios."

"Charmed," said Thomas, and his bulk stirred in what was meant for a bow.

"You honor my country by your visit," Iturbe said gravely.

"Suppose we proceed," I said.

"To what, sir? To what shall we proceed?"

"To the object," said I, "of the arrangement between yourself and Miss Brown to bring about a meeting with me on foreign soil."

He spread his hands as if bewildered. "But, my good doctor, there was no such prearrangement. Between myself and Miss Brown is no entente, not even casual acquaintance. My arrival is without significance. I came but to disport myself among the delectable viands to be obtained under this roof."

"I am not in a position to accuse you of untruth," said I, "but you will note a mental reservation."

William George Thomas gestured helplessly. "How," he demanded, "can the untutored mind hope to cope with the brain of an illustrious man of science? I sit befogged, bewildered, flabbergasted, and in a maze."

The door of the cafe opened. A man stood there, a Mexican of the lower class. His black eyes roved the room and came to rest upon William George Thomas. He lifted his arm. He had a knife in his hand.

There was a forward motion and instinctively I thrust at the fat man's chair with my foot. It was fortunate —for him. There was a thud, and quivering in the wooden reinforcement of the back of the wheelchair was a knife.

With incredible swiftness Senor Iturbe was on his feet, lunging toward the door. The knife thrower had vanished. Senor Iturbe, too, vanished. In the hush, the sound of running feet was audible outside.

William George Thomas moved slowly in his chair. He peered at the knife which had so narrowly missed his throat.

"Ah," he said, seemingly without emotion. "Curious! Curious indeed!"

He turned his eyes away from the knife to me.

"It would seem," he said, "that I am under an obligation to you, Dr. Gimp. It may be that I have my foibles, sir but ingratitude is not one of them."

He signalled imperatively to his motive power. "The soil of Mexico," he said in farewell, "is not clement. I shall shake its dust from my feet. A good evening to you, doctor, and to you, Miss Brown. I trust there will be no further interruptions to your outing."

He was trundled away, massive, imperturbable. He seemed not to be shaken. Inside the repulsive bulk of him must have been nerves of iron.

"From this adventure," said Melinna, "you should draw a conclusion."

"I have not yet," said I, "had time to examine its implications."

"Pounce upon the obvious," she said.

"Reason tells me," said I, "that Mr. Thomas' coming was expected and that preparations were made for his reception. One does not procure a skilled knife-thrower in an instant. There was premeditation."

"Conclusion number one," she said. "Proceed to conclusion number two."

"Number two," I said, "is not a conclusion, but a surmise: that Mr. Thomas was lured to this spot."

She nodded emphatically. "And is there a corollary to that?"

"There seems to be," said I. "It is that his coming had nothing to do with me."

"How did you scramble to that point?"

"Because," I told her, "if I had been the objective of his coming, then it must have been you who lured him. It must, then, have been you who, to use a criminal term, put him on the spot."

"Is that impossible?" she asked.

"My answer," said I, "is not based upon logic. Perhaps there is such a thing as instinct. Whatever the source of my conclusion, it is firm. My reply is that it is impossible."

MELINNA smiled. "Could the source of your information," she asked, "be the heart?"

"Nonsense!" I said firmly. "The heart is an organ concerned with the circulation of the blood."

"Then why," she demanded, "does it beat so furiously that it almost stifles you"—she paused and then finished lamely—"sometimes?"

"Mine does not," I told her.

She was impish again. "Have patience," she said. "It will."

She had the power to create mental uneasiness. I did not wish her to perceive that I was unsure of myself.

"Shall we return to El Paso?" I asked.

"Before something else happens," she said demurely.

I summoned the waiter and paid our checks. Then we walked back to the customs and passed easily across the line into the United States. A cab was available. We were not talkative on our way to Melinna's house. There I saw her to the door.

"Goodnight," she said; "thank you for a very eccentric evening."

"I will see you at the bus in the morning," I said, and then was surprised at myself for saying so.

"How nice," Melinna said, and closed the door.

I went home, undressed and retired, but sleep would not come. My thoughts darted from one thing to another erratically. I found myself visualising the man Balthasar Toledo and his Greek-god beauty. Him I had not seen since our unfortunate encounter in the cafe. Melinna had not mentioned him.

Then without reason, my mind darted away to the naked body we had discovered on the desert and to the strange fact that he had been shaved after death. Something said to me almost with the distinctness of a speaking voice that he had been shaved to prevent identification.

I wondered what Major Van Tuyl had accomplished in the way of discovering the man's name. Then, and quite incomprehensibly, the two prospectors or miners who were allowed to abide in the Organ Mountains intruded themselves. I wondered what two such men, sequestered in their fastness, found to talk about.

What would be the attitude of two such men, shut away for months at a time from other human companionship, be toward each other?

They might reach a point where they hated each other. Two unwashed, unkempt, bearded men searching for treasure, not because of the money worth of what they found, but because it was their destiny to seek, and the mere finding would be the reward. Two unkempt, unwashed, bearded men.

Suddenly I sat erect in bed. It was the word "bearded" that had startled me. A man with a smooth face might disguise himself by wearing a beard; on the other hand, a bearded man might be disguised by removing his beard. A bearded corpse might be disguised by shaving its beard after death.

So that naked corpse might not be a mystery whose solution was important to the well-being of White Sands, but only a squalid desert tragedy.

It must have been at some point just subsequent to reaching this conclusion that I fell asleep. The alarm clock awakened me. I shaved, dressed, breakfasted, and walked to the bus station.

Melinna was there. This morning she was the efficient, unglamorous laboratory assistant, not the lovely, titillating woman of last night. She said good-morning almost indifferently, and we occupied a seat together.

"Melinna," I asked presently, "have you seen Balthasar Toledo since that night?"

"No," she answered.

"You were acquainted with him before my arrival?"

"Yes. What gives—a cross-examination?"

"He was in El Paso, then, previous to his arrival on the same train that brought me?"

"Annoyingly so," she replied. "He hasn't bothered me since that night. Maybe you left-hooked him out of my life."

We were well out in the desert when she pointed. "There," she said, "is one of those prospectors."

I leaned across her to peer out of the window. We were passing an old, shabby pickup truck. On the driver's seat sat a big man with untrimmed beard, with skin burned almost to blackness, with a filthy, flopping, wide-brimmed felt hat pressed down upon his overlong greasy hair.

"Only one of them," I said. "Have you seen these prospectors often?"

"Not often," she said. "Twice or three times."

"Did you," I asked, "ever see one of them alone before?"

"Come to think of it, no," she answered. "Why?"

I shrugged and made no reply. We roared past the pickup truck and its driver, and that was that.

We alighted at headquarters, where, instead of accompanying Melinna to the laboratory, I climbed the stairs to Van Tuyl's office.

"More flies light on the sticky paper?" he asked genially.

"Last evening," I said, "was not uneventful."

"Tell me," he directed.

I described the events as they had occurred in the Mexican restaurant. But I could not bring myself to relate how Melinna had met William George Thomas upon the arrival of our bus in El Paso, nor how she had walked away with him in earnest conversation.

"But," said I, "it was not last night's excitements that I came to relate. I came really to state to you a conjecture."

"Which is?"

"That the nude body we discovered was that of one of the prospectors you have permitted to ply their vocation in the Organ Mountains."

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"Based upon what?"

"Beard," said I. "Shaven beard."

"Oho!" exclaimed Major Van Tuyl. "You mean, doctor, that his killing might not have been a matter affecting security at all, but merely the result of a quarrel between partners?"

"That," said I, "would be reassuring."

"It would," he answered. "Run along now and have a happy day playing with your electronics. I'll put the microscope on prospectors." He eyed me in a humorous manner and shook his head. I walked out striving to control the irritation he awakened in me.

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Doctor Newcomb was awaiting me with certain data derived from the discharge and flight of a Viking rocket which had reached an altitude approaching the F-1 layer of the ionosphere some one hundred and twenty-five miles above the earth's surface.

"It has been said," he observed, "that the speed of a rocket is limited to the speed of light."

I nodded. My mind was proceeding along another line. "We must always bear in mind," said I, "that the rocket is the only jet engine capable of operating outside the atmosphere—that is, in interstellar space—because it is the only jet engine carrying its own oxidizer."

"Elementary, my dear Doctor Watson," he said smilingly.

"But our particular concern," said I, thinking aloud, "is to perfect an electronic intelligence which will report and correct all errors; which will seek out and contact its target, whether in motion or stationary. That perfection we have not attained."

"Nearly, though," said Doctor Newcomb. "We have accomplished so much that Soviet Russia would consider it a rare bargain if it could purchase that device"—he touched with his foot a container not larger than a good-sized suitcase—"and transport it across the ocean to its own electronic scientists."

"The brain," said I, looking down almost with awe at the small device upon which so much of scientific labor and solid treasure had been expended.

"You or I," he said grimly, "could become a millionaire if we could contrive to smuggle that container and its contents out of White Sands and deliver it to enemy hands."

"Has such an offer," I asked, "ever been made to you?"

"No," he said grimly. "They don't work that way. They're more adroit."

I continued to stare at the container, which I could lift without severe strain.

"If," said I, "I succumbed to temptation and managed to get this thing past the security guards, I wouldn't know what to do with it—to whom to deliver it." I smiled loftily. "One couldn't," said I, "stand in the market place and shout that one was offering for sale to the highest bidder an electronic brain."

"Doctor Gimp," said he, "do you suppose that every man in a position such as yours and mine has not been screened as carefully by Soviet intelligence as we were screened by the FBI before we were trusted to carry on our work? I'll venture that there's a dossier on you and me in some Soviet filing cabinet as exhaustive and exact as to astonish. The enemy will know our every weakness, our every ambition. He will know what temptation is most apt to destroy our loyalty. He will have looked for sins upon which to base blackmail."

"Not pleasant to contemplate," said I.

"It also," said he, "is not pleasant to contemplate the fact that these miscreants will be seeking a way to entangle you in some unsavory mess which will place you in their power. Or, if they cannot do that, to—as the underworld expresses it—frame you. These people will stop at nothing. Men like you and me live under a constant threat."

I never had heard Doctor Newcomb talk in this manner. It alarmed me. I never had thought of myself as an individual of interest to a foreign power. I never had considered the possibility that I might become enmeshed in some web capable of destroying me.

"So," said Doctor Newcomb gravely, "keep a weather eye peeled. Walk the straight and narrow. Suspect your dearest friend. Suspect me." He paused impressively.

"I had a dear friend," he went on, "who shot himself. The reason could only be guessed at. My suspicion is that he was faced with the choice of betraying his country or being charged with some turpitude which would have stripped him of all he held dear. He chose not to betray his country."

We dropped that unpleasant subject and returned to study of the data that lay before us on the desk.

It was just before five o'clock that my telephone rang. It was Major Van Tuyl.

"Doctor," he said irritably, "you gave me a tough day's work. Stick to science and don't go hunting mare's nests. I went into the Organs to the prospect hole of those two prospectors. They were both there. They were both alive and profane, complete with whiskers."

"I'm sorry, major," I said.

"Don't be. It was good reasoning."

A thought occurred to me. "Major," I asked, "are you certain they were the same two miners?"

There was a prolonged silence. Then he spoke testily. "Doctor," he said, "you've got the most annoying type of mind I ever bumped into." He hung up abruptly.

IT was on the following Thursday evening that I found a note awaiting me on my return to my apartment. It was from Renee du Gueslin and was rather urgent in nature. It was almost in the nature of a command.

"You have been neglecting me," it said. "You will come tonight at seven or I will know that you do not wish to be my friend. We will dine here together, and then we shall see."

It was both a threat and a promise. I stood holding the note in my hand and studying my reactions to it. One of the most beautiful women I ever had seen was, to put it baldly, making advances.

No man with pretensions to masculinity but would be stirred. I was complimented. That so lovely a person should favor me as she seemed to do was flattering.

I gave myself a word of caution. I asked myself if there could be any underlying motive to her invitation which might be dangerous to me. I admitted that possibility. At the same time I took into consideration the urging of Major Van Tuyl that I expose myself to advances that might be made.

From this reflection it was easy to convince myself that even if risk was involved, it was my duty to accede to Miss du Gueslin's demand.

Consequently, I dressed myself with care, and, at seven o'clock, presented myself at Miss du Gueslin's door.

The impact of her appearance was powerful. She was even more lovely than I had pictured her. She seemed younger, more appealingly helpless and naive. And her greeting was such as to arouse in me a sensation of acute pleasure. She extended both hands in welcome and drew me into the house.

"I was afraid," she said, "that you would not come."

"Why should I not come?" I asked.

"You might," she answered, "have misconstrued the coming of that dreadful fat man."

I countered with a question, "Why did you put his note to you in my pocket?"

"Because," she said, sitting close beside me on the divan, "I was frightened."

"Of what?"

"Of that monstrous man," she said, and pressed more closely to me.

"Why?" I asked.

"I don't know. I never saw him before, but he terrified me. He is an evil man. He reeked with evil. Could you not sense it? An emanation! And that message!"

"What did it signify to you?" I asked.

"Nothing," she answered. "It meant nothing. 'Stop! Look! Listen!' Is of the railroads, is it not?"

Her lovely hand reached for mine and clutched it. This was not unpleasant even though the most rudimentary intelligence would detect that she was lying. The message had a meaning to her, a meaning well understood.

She shivered. "I am cold," she said, "not cold as in winter, but cold with fear. Put your arm around me."

She was indeed trembling. Fear was upon her, and it was a genuine fear, not simulated. But as I placed my arm about her shoulders she did not feel cold. She was alluringly warm. I was inclined to think more about her and her proximity than about the puzzle she presented.

A question occurred to me: Was she aware of the emotion she aroused in me or was her conduct instinctive, the actions of a frightened young woman seeking reassurance?

"Miss du Gueslin," I asked firmly, "are you for some reason deliberately courting me?"

She did not withdraw from me nor did she seem offended. She did, however, lift her head and smile at me.

"It is the gentleman," she said, "who courts the lady."

"I doubt it," I answered. "It is the lady who supplies the allurement. She makes herself desirable; she employs devices to make herself more beautiful; she exerts wiles to make the gentleman desire her."

"You are a funny man," she said. "You make love as if you were in a laboratory."

"I am not making love," I said firmly.

"Then what do you do?" she asked, and laughted a tinkling little laugh that was derisive. "You sit beside me. Your arms hold me. My head is on your shoulder. What you call that, eh?"

At this moment a bell rang outside the door. Miss du Gueslin sat erect. "It is dinner. You and I, we shall dine. Afterwards, then we shall argue again if you make love. Eh? We shall settle that point."

It was a simple but excellently prepared dinner, served by a girl who might have been Mexican or Indian. During the eating of it, Renee du Gueslin and I did not approach either the subject we had been discussing or that of William George Thomas and his cryptic note.

The girl came in, bringing dessert, and Miss du Gueslin said to her, "After you have cleared the table and washed the dishes, you may go to your home."

Undoubtedly that had been the understanding with the servant when she had been hired for the occasion, and equally evidently, Miss du Gueslin took this means of making it clear to me that presently we would be alone in the house.

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We returned to the living-room, but not to the divan. Not that I was reluctant, but I wanted to keep my head clear at least for a time. And then, unexpectedly, I found myself thinking about Melinna Brown.

This was disconcerting. I was able clearly to visualise the expression that would settle on Melinna's face if she should see me on that divan, my arm around the seductive Miss du Guesclin and her head upon my shoulder. The thought of that expression caused me to squirm. Not that it was any of Melinna's business.

I coined an aphorism: No man can cope with more than one woman at a time. To which I added, dubiously, a corollary: And quite probably not with one.

Miss du Guesclin peered at me slantwise, with invitation in her eyes. She patted the divan beside her.

"Come to me," she said.

"Presently," I replied. "I want to consider."

"Is this," she asked, "a time for consideration?"

"I wish," said I, "to look before I leap."

"Look at me, then," she said, leaning toward me, "and then, it may be, you will not have the hesitation to leap."

She frowned as the telephone rang. To me, this was welcome relief from the necessity to make a decision. I listened.

"Yes, thees is Miss du Guesclin. . . . No, it is not convenient. . . . It is not convenient because already I have a caller. . . . Goodbye."

She replaced the receiver and turned to me. I could see that her eyes were troubled. "It was a business," she said. "I do not wish to be trouble with business tonight."

"When I was here before," said I, "your telephone rang."

"True."

"And afterwards William George Thomas intruded."

"That is so."

"Do you imagine he or someone else will intrude tonight?"

"Because of the telephone call?"

"Yes."

With bent brows, she stood peering at me. "Of me," she said, either sadly or with spurious sadness, "you are suspicious."

"Let us say that I have a mental reservation."

"But why — why?" she asked, and came nearer to me.

"Because," said I, not guarding my words, "the bleating of the kid attracts the tiger."

Her eyes grew big. "But that means nothing. It ees not an answer. What ees thees kid—this small boy, is it not? What ees this tiger?" Her English became more foreign.

"The kid," said I, "is not a small boy; it is a baby goat. It is tied to a stake, where it bleats in the darkness to lure the tiger to the hunters."

She thought about that and shook her head as if she did not understand. "Am I this baby goat?" she asked at length.

"No," I replied.

"Am I, then, thees tiger?" She paused. "Or am I thees hunter?" She shrugged her alluring shoulders. "Thees is so stupid," she said. "Me, I am no leetle goat. I am no tiger. I am no hunter. I like better to be hunted—to be hunted by you. Let us, then, forget thees things of the jungle, and be just man and woman in thees nice room."

I heard the closing of the back door. The servant was gone and we were alone in the house.

"Now," she said, "we shall be as we were."

She did not sit again on the divan, but moved to the door of her room.

"In a moment I will return," she said. "For a moment you will be patient."

She closed the door behind her. I sat and considered if the better part of wisdom was not quietly to withdraw while she was gone. That would be discourteous, but it would be final.

I got to my feet and stood hesitant. Then I sat down again. I might have vague suspicions of Miss du Guesclin, but no certainty. She might indeed be what she wished me to think her: merely an exquisite girl of hot Latin blood, who had, without rhyme or reason, become infatuated with me. That was not impossible. Women have become infatuated with less likely men than I.

If this were not the fact—if, on the contrary, she were using her beautiy to accomplish some purpose perilous to me—that very thing might be what Major Van Tuyl desired. He had promised that I would be watched and guarded.

I am not certain which consideration was the one that induced me to remain—Major Van Tuyl or the promise of Miss du Guesclin's luscious beauty and desirability. At any rate, I did not carry out my half-formed intention to take my departure.

Miss du Guesclin did not return promptly. Five minutes passed and her door did not open. I wondered what complicated cosmetics she might be using to enhance unnecessarily her loveliness. I admit to a measure of excitation.

Ten minutes passed and I became definitely impatient. Fifteen minutes passed and I became uneasy. I remembered the brief telephone conversation. This added to my uneasiness, and uneasiness became alarm.

Nothing normal could cause Miss du Guesclin to remain absent so long—not when her eyes had shown such eagerness to return. It might be that she had fallen suddenly ill; that she had fainted.

I got to my feet and approached her bedroom door. I hesitated, and then rapped. There was no response. I turned the knob reluctantly. I opened the door.

Miss du Guesclin lay upon her bed, one exquisite limb exposed. She was very still. I walked to the bed. The top of her dainty hostess gown was wet and stained with red. I bent over her and lifted her hand and felt for the pulse beat. I could find none. I ventured to place my hand over her heart. There was not a throb.

I KNEW a moment of stark terror. While I had sat a few feet away someone had entered her room stealthily, silently, and stabbed her to death. Almost within reach of my hand this monstrous thing had been done, and I had been helpless to prevent it.

In the first moment of shock I did not consider my own position—that I was here, alone with the body of this beautiful dead girl. But then awareness of my predicament came to me.

Murder had been done, and I was there with the victim. There could be no other result than that suspicion should rest heavily upon me—hard suspicion if not certainty. Motive would not be wanting—the age-old motive of sex.

I could see myself under arrest, on trial, sentenced to punishment by a stern judge. I could see the ruin, if not the termination, of my life itself. I stood appalled.

I stood there for minutes. I grew somewhat calmer. I forced my eyes to look again at the mortal remains of Renee du Guesclin.

It was then that I saw a folded paper beside her outflung hand. My first thought was that here was hope; that here was a suicide's note which would save me.

I snatched it, read it—read its incredible message. The message was directed to me, printed crudely.

"Dr. Gimp," it said, "the lady was expendable."

It seemed an interminable time before I recovered from my initial shock at this discovery. But it could have been only a matter of moments before my mind resumed its functions and I became aware of the plight in which I found myself.

It was evident that I had been adroitly selected to be the scapegoat. Action rather than thought was indicated. The impulse to self-preservation asserted itself.

My duty as a citizen demanded that I notify the police and await their coming. But to do so would be, it seemed to me, to surrender to the planning of those who had brought me to this pass.

I picked up the paper upon which was the message. It had been penned by a hand hardened to the taking of human life—by a ruthless, cynical, evil hand. I folded it and put in my pocket.

Then, acting swiftly but efficiently, I removed from the house such evidence of my presence as might be there. With my handkerchief I wiped possible fingerprints from the door-knob of the dead girl's bedroom. I repeated this precaution, wiping every object my fingers could have touched.

For an instant I scrutinised the room to see if there remained any indications of my presence. And then I took my departure through the back door, from the back door into an alley, and walked by a roundabout way to my apartment.

The point of danger was the girl who had cooked and served the dinner. Undoubtedly the police would find and question her. Or it might be that, with the fear of the police inherent in her class, she might remain mute and invisible. It was possible that all the information she could give the police was that some man, nameless to her, had dined with Miss du Guesclin.

It was a thing I could do nothing about. To ignore it was my only course.

As I walked I had time to consider. I asked myself what the perpetrators of this deed could gain by my arrest and conviction for murder. The answer was they would gain nothing. If this was the case, why had it been planned that I should be placed in such a position?

The solution of that problem was not far to seek. Someone possessed knowledge. That knowledge would be held over my head for purposes of blackmail. Not the sort of blackmail that demands cash payment, but the sort that demands some action in return for silence. And that action could refer to nothing save the position of trust I held in the laboratory at White Sands. Murder, I was convinced, was to be used as an instrument to compel me to betray that trust.

I felt some resentment against Major Van Tuyl and the FBI. He had assured me that an eye would be kept upon me, a protective eye. On the other hand, in all fairness, they could not be expected to supervise every engagement I kept with a lady. Certainly they had no way of knowing that I would leave my apartment that night and go to Miss du Guesclin's house. I could not accuse them of being remiss.

I had been in my apartment less than

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fifteen minutes when my telephone rang. I lifted the receiver from its cradle and said hello.

"Doctor Gimp?" asked a voice.

"Speaking," said I.

"Are you sure," the voice answered, and its tone was unpleasantly jocular, "that you removed all your fingerprints?"

"Who are you?" I asked.

"That," said the voice, "is for you to worry about. You can wipe away fingerprints, but you can't wipe away eyewitnesses."

"Come to the point," I said.

"In good time," he replied. "There's also the matter of the girl who served your dinner. Ignorant little thing. But if you were to be stood under a bright light, she'd be sure to identify you."

"Again I suggest that you come to the point."

"We just want you to know where you stand," he said. He laughed shortly. "It's a nasty feeling not to know when a policeman's hand will clip you on the shoulder."

"A worry," said I, "that you might be sharing with me."

"The man has spirit!" he said admiringly. "You won't enjoy stewing in your juice. Tougher lads than you have broken under it."

"You have not yet," I said, "arrived at the point."

"The point is," he said, "that we may have a slight favor to ask of you. Not at the moment. But when the time comes, we hope you'll be in a state of mind to grant it. Good night, Doctor Gimp. Sweet dreams."

The line was dead. I replaced the instrument. They had been prompt to let me know where I stood. It was upon an unpleasant spot.

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I doubted that I would be able to sleep, but eventually I did so. My alarm clock awakened me. I dressed, breakfasted, and made my way to the bus stop. I would have preferred not to find Melinna Brown there, but she was waiting with the others, and I could not avoid her. She bade me a cheerful good morning, to which I responded shortly.

"Grumpy," she said. I grunted in response.

"Wrong side of the bed," she said, and shrugged. "It's important data."

"What," I demanded, "are you talking about?"

"A girl," she said, "should know about it. How a man wakes up. It's my bet that more homes are busted up at breakfast than at any other time of the day."

"You're talking nonsense," I said.

"No, indeed! But, on the other hand, I'd loathe a man who got up singing madrigals. Whooping around the house."

"And I," said I, "don't care for a young woman who goes whooping around in a bus."

"I didn't whoop," she said. "I merely burbled." She eyed me mischievously. "What happened last night to put you in a foul humor this morning? Wouldn't the lady play?"

"How," I asked unguardedly, "did you know I was with a lady?"

"I didn't," she said. "But I do now. Would it be that alley cat masquerading as a Persian kitten?"

"How," I demanded, "do you know about her?"

"You recognise the description," she said tartly. "Oh, I have my spies around." She crinkled her eyes. "You'd better stay another year in the minors. You're not ready for the big league yet." Her eyes were not altogether friendly now. "You'd be a sucker for the hidden-ball trick."

"Your language," I rebuked, "is crude."

"Friend of my childhood," she said, "you don't know the rudiments of crude. Wait till you see me swap words for actions. I'll show you crudeness that'll curl your inhibited hair."

"Will you desist," I said, "from chattering? I wish to think."

"I will," she told me, "if you'll say 'uncle.'"

That word took me back through the years to the little fat girl swinging on the gate. Suddenly my resentment against her impertinence subsided and another emotion took its place. There was no resemblance between Melinna Brown's slender loveliness and that rotund child who had shamed me into belligerence so long ago — not physically. But inwardly, imponderably, she was that same little girl—the child who had first aroused in me an interest in rocket ships as she read from a paper-backed book in the shade of a lilac bush.

That little chit had done something to me and for me. She had come briefly into my life and then disappeared from it. But she had modified me and suddenly I felt welling up in me a surge of gratitude to her.

BREAKING our silence abruptly, I said, "Uncle," in a voice that made Melinna turn her head and peer at me. Her straight look became a gamin grin.

"Well," she said, "I'll be dashed!"

"If," I asked her presently, "you were in a quandary—a serious quandary—what would you do?"

"That would depend," she answered.

"Upon what?"

"Upon," she said, "whether my quandary affected myself alone or if it had to do with others. It would depend upon whether right and wrong were mixed up in it. It would depend upon whether my decision involved courage or cowardice. I think, if it was a bad quandary, I would take it outdoors and expose it to the mountains."

"What do you mean by that?" I asked.

"You can't rub elbows with the majesty of great mountains and be small or mean or cowardly. They advise you 'My strength cometh from the hills.'" she said gravely.

I sat silent. I peered from the window of the speeding bus across sunlit reaches of the desert towards the rampart of mountains and corrected her quotation. "'I lift mine eyes unto the hills from which cometh my strength.'"

"I guess," she said softly, "you've answered your own question."

I had done so.

The bus stopped at the administration building. I climbed its broad steps and ascended to the second floor, where I walked to the office of Major Van Tuyl, chief of intelligence and security. I did not have to wait, but was shown at once into his private room. He looked up from his desk and his eyes were saturnine.

"What caper now?" he asked.

"I," said I, "am putting myself in your hands."

"My hands are pretty full," he said sourly. "But maybe I can crowd you in. Give."

"Nobody," said I, "is agreeable to being accused, tried, and convicted of murder."

He leaned forward and fixed me with level, shrewd eyes.

"Who," he asked, "has been murdered?"

"A woman," I answered, "named Renee du Guesclin."

He inhaled a sudden breath. "When?" he asked.

"Last night," said I, "between nine-thirty and ten."

"How," he asked, "do you get fingered for it?"

"I was there," I said. "I found her body."

"That makes three," he snapped. "It's a habit." He paused an instant. "How did you stumble over this one?"

"I didn't stumble. I was there."

"In her house?"

"Yes." I tossed across to him her imperative note of invitation. He glanced at it, frowning.

"Somebody slipped," he said.

"There was a cryptic telephone conversation," I repeated to him what I had heard. "She served an excellent dinner. Afterward she went into her bedroom, leaving me alone. I waited. After fifteen minutes, I became disturbed. I rapped on her door, but there was no response. I walked in. She was dead."

"And then?" he asked.

"I picked up the message."

"What message?"

That, too, I passed to him. He read it aloud, "Doctor Gimp: The lady was expendable." "

He grunted. "And then?"

"I wiped away my fingerprints as best I could. I removed evidence of my presence, and went away from there, using the back door."

"Anything else?" He was terse.

I repeated, word for word, the telephone conversation which had taken place after my return to my apartment. And then I was angry.

"You asked me—directed me, in fact—to let myself be used by you and the FBI as a lure. I acceded to your demand. But I didn't forsee that it would result in the murder of a beautiful girl. I would have been no party to such a thing."

He, too, became angry. "Do you think I or the FBI deals in murder? Do you think we would procure a murder for any purpose?"

"You are a ruthless lot," I said.

"When the security of our country is threatened, we can be ruthless," he answered.

"I suppose," said I, "that I am expendable, too."

"Any one of us," he answered, "is expendable if the situation requires it." His face became less stern; he smiled grimly. "You are expendable, Doctor Gimp. But we shan't squander you. We're not so prodigal."

"Reassuring," said I ironically. "Will you have to disclose everything to the police?"

"Not the El Paso police nor the state police. We're fishing for sharks. We can't have our bait gobbled by flounders."

"So," I asked, "what do I do?"

"'They also serve who only stand and wait,'" he quoted. "Just sit still, doctor, and see what lights on you next."

"And meantime," I said sourly, "I shall have the same efficient protection as last night?"

"We can't sleep with you," he said shortly. And then, "They made no definite demand upon you?"

"No. I was to stew in my juice."

"That means they're not ready. Their plans, whatever they are, are not complete."

"Plans," said I, "to steal the electronic brain?"

"What else?" he demanded. "Now scram," he said, and as I reached the door, "We'll try to do a better job of chaperoning from now on."

"I hope so," I said dubiously.

I walked to the laboratory. I found Doctor Newcomb awaiting me in some impatience. He wanted me to go with him to the Army building to which the wreckage of a Nike had been returned the night before by the searching crew. It was a crumpled mass of metal, but we were hopeful that enough remained

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of its electronic equipment for us to study and from which to draw conclusions.

After we completed our observations we lunched at the Officers' Club. It was a hot day. We were in need of some relaxation, so we were driven to the Navy's swimming pool for a dip.

As we emerged from the dressing-room, clad in bathing suits, we saw a small figure poised on the highest platform of the diving tower. She stood a moment, arms outspread, and then her body plunged downward in a graceful, skilfully executed movement known as the swan dive.

She emerged from the water a dozen feet from us, and for an instant created the impression of nudity. But there was a scant bathing suit, nevertheless, and inside the bathing suit was Melinna Brown.

I stared. I admit it without shame. Never in my limited experience had I seen a body so exquisitely formed. No engineer on his drawing-board could have drawn a mechanism of such perfection of line. Then I ceased to think of Melinna Brown in scientific terms. I found myself thinking of her as a woman, and it would be only a slight exaggeration to say that I was enraptured by what I saw.

She became conscious of my scrutiny and grinned at me impishly. "Like it?" she asked, and then ran towards the shelter of the dressing-rooms.

I emerged from a somewhat dazed condition to find Doctor Newcomb regarding me with a quizzical expression.

"She does affect people that way," he said dryly.

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My telephone rang and it was not necessary for the caller to identify himself by name. I recognised the voice that musical, cultured voice of William George Thomas.

"Doctor Gimp," he said, "I have been remiss. I am under obligation to you which I never can repay, but which should have been acknowledged ere this. My excuse is that I have been indisposed."

"I am aware of no obligation," I answered.

"Nevertheless," he said, "I shall be gratified if you will dine with me this evening in my hotel. If you will so far gratify me. At eight o'clock, if that is not too late. May I expect you?"

I doubted that the fat man was one to be overly concerned about an obligation if one existed. That he had some covert purpose in offering me hospitality seemed more likely. The only way I could learn what this might be was to accept his invitation. I was unable to see how any harm could come to me in the dining-room of a reputable hotel. There was also likelihood that the FBI would be more alert than on the tragic evening when I had dined with Miss du Guesclin.

"I shall be agreeable to dining with you, Mr. Thomas," I said to him.

"I'm delighted," he answered. "At eight o'clock then."

Immediately he was off the wire I called the field office of the FBI.

"This is Doctor Thomas Alva Edison Gimp," I said when I was connected to the special agent in charge. "I have just accepted an invitation to dine with William George Thomas at eight in the dining-room of his hotel."

"Thank you for notifying us, Doctor Gimp," was the reply.

I did not think it essential to dress for the occasion, but I did don a freshly pressed suit. I was prompt. I entered the dining-room exactly at eight. Mr. Thomas already was there, seated in his wheel-chair at the table he had reserved. His bow of welcome, though he did not arise, was stately and the smile that lighted his repulsively flabby face was warm.

"It is more agreeable," he said, "to be alive than to be dead. Unless you be one of those who believe the hereafter to be a time of eternal delight. I, myself, prefer to prolong the more ponderable enjoyments available to a body of flesh and blood rather than those of a more tenuous and undemonstrated nature promised to a disembodied soul. I thank you for enabling me to do so."

"It was but a muscular reflex," I answered. "I saw the knife. Quite mechanically I kicked your chair."

"Then," he said, and there was sincerity in his musical voice, "I shall transfer my gratitude to your co-ordination." He peered at me a moment. "One would not have expected such instantaneous muscular response to sudden stimulus from one who lives not in a world of action, but in one of the intellect."

"My mother," said I, "was insistent that the training of the body should parallel the training of the mind."

"Well for me that she did so," he said graciously.

He had ordered the dinner with the skill of a gourmet and we addressed ourselves to the consumption of it.

"Superb food," said he, "deserves undivided attention."

With this I agreed. It was not until we had eaten our fill that any significant word was spoken. Then it was uttered with a rueful humor.

"Doctor," he said, and his slits of eyes above the fat of his cheeks twinkled with good humor, "you fooled me rather gorgeously some nights ago."

"In what manner?" I asked.

"In the matter of the note I delivered to Miss du Guesclin, which she secreted in your pocket. The late Miss du Guesclin. Her tragic and untimely end is puzzling our local constabulary. The joke was on me. I congratulate you upon your adroitness. But, may one ask, to what end?"

"I am of an inquiring mind," said I. "Otherwise I would not have chosen the field of research as my life's work. I noted various phenomena which aroused my curiosity."

"Naturally," he said easily. "And what theory did you form?"

"I am not one," said I, "to postulate a theory upon insufficient data."

"Excellent," he said cheerfully. "In certain scientific explorations it is axiomatic that the collection of data is not unaccompanied by peril to the collector. There might be detonations."

I FROWNED. "Would it not be better if we gave over verbal fencing, Mr. Thomas? Did you invite me here this evening to promulgate a warning or to pronounce a threat?"

"I would not be so crude, Doctor Gimp. I was but indulging in dialectics. I was playing with an idea, frolicking with cause and effect."

Before I could make reply to this evasion, the man Balthasar Toledo entered the dining-room, brushed aside the headwaiter, and strode between diners to our table. One could not but admire the Grecian perfection of his face, its classic proportions, the broad brow, the lack of indentation above the nose.

Since I had seen him, there was a difference, but it was a difference of coloration. His skin was a chocolate-brown, tanned by wind and sun, and his wrists and hands had taken on the same coloration. Mr. Toledo had been exposing himself to the climate of the region.

He did not wait for an invitation, nor did he trouble himself with courteous greetings. On the contrary, uninvited he drew a chair from a neighboring table and seated himself between us.

"So," he said harshly to Mr. Thomas, "you came out of your burrow."

"One must needs come up for air," said Mr. Thomas. He chose to be amused. "Even you and I," he said, "must observe the amenities. You are, I believe, acquainted with Doctor Gimp. You have not greeted him."

The look Balthasar Toledo turned upon me was not friendly. "I have met Doctor Gimp," he said shortly.

"So it has been reported to me," Mr. Thomas said with meaning.

"It was," said I, "rather an encounter than a meeting."

"Which I have not forgotten," Toledo said. "You have been dodging me, my fat friend," he said to Thomas.

"Not dodging. My build—as you so amiably point out—is not adapted for the agility involved in dodging."

"The time has come," said Toledo, "when you and I must talk."

"About what, my friend?"

"Do you want me to tell you with this pedantic nuisance listening?"

Mr. Thomas waited as if hoping for me to make some reply. I thought it essential that I should do so.

"Mr. Toledo," I said, "I am not one easily to take offence, but I find your manner repulsive. Indeed, I find a great deal about you to be repulsive. I hope you will see fit to mend your manners."

"And if I don't?" he demanded belligerently.

"Why then," said I, "I shall feel it incumbent upon me to give you a second, and perhaps more emphatic, lesson in decorum."

He made as if to push back his chair. His face was dark, his lips drawn back viciously. Before he could make a belligerent movement, Mr. Thomas spoke. His voice was not gracious now, nor musical. It snapped like a whip.

"Sit still, Toledo," he said. And then, less imperatively, but softly ironical, "Is your business such as needs advertisement?"

"Send the——" Toledo paused and amended his speech. "Ask Doctor Gimp to excuse himself. The time has come for you and me to talk."

"Doctor Gimp is my honored guest. You are an intruder. Why should we discuss, Toledo? Our interests are inimical."

"Matters have reached a point," Toledo said, "where we should join forces."

"An admission of weakness, my dear Toledo. I am conscious of no such necessity. I find myself adequate, quite competent to carry to success the project upon which I am embarked."

"Half a loaf," Toledo snarled, "is better than no bread."

I looked across the room. At a table some dozen feet away, against the wall, sat a young man in a neat blue suit who might have been an attorney at law. He was eating slowly, engrossed in his dinner. But somehow, as I noted his presence, I was reassured. I was chaperoned.

The more or less cryptic conversation between Thomas and Toledo was interrupted. As it had proceeded I was not unhappy to discover that they were at cross purposes. Now they fell silent as a fourth person, showing beautifully white teeth in a smile, came to our table.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said. "Es it permitted that I shall join you?"

It was young Senor Iturbe, brother of the man who had been murdered on the Golden State Limited. I remem-

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bered my manners even if Toledo had forgotten his. He was there. I performed the introduction.

"Senor Iturbe," said I, "this person is Mr. Toledo. Mr. Toledo, Mr. Iturbe is a member of the Policia Judical Federal de los Territorios of our sister republic of Mexico."

"Charmed," said Senor Iturbe.

Toledo contented himself with a curt inclination of the head.

"But I am here for the pleasure," said Senor Iturbe. "As you come to my country for the pleasure so soon ago. Not official, no. Oh, very personal." He turned to me with a genial smile. "You have not shoot off another great, disobedient rocket which come bang into our graveyard. That ees nice. Our dead people do not like to be disturb' before the day when all must awake."

"I'm sure," I said, "our missiles will be better behaved in future." I spoke to no one in particular, but let the remark drop casually. "Senor Iturbe," said I, "is brother to that other Senor Iturbe who met his death on the Golden State. You, too, were aboard that train, Mr. Toledo."

"I and a hundred other people," he said.

"He," said I, "was not expendable." I scrutinised the faces of Toledo and Thomas as I said this. There was nothing to observe, no change of expression, no sudden start.

"My brother," said Iturbe, "might have been expendable to my government. But not to me. I have been grant' a—how do you say?—leave of absence. Yes. To attend to family affairs. It is a family affair to show to someone that a brother is ver' not expendable."

He smiled from one to the other of us as if he had been talking about something light and inconsiderable, but somehow it was more impressive than if he had uttered savage threats of vengeance. There was a brief silence. Then Toledo bent over the table toward William George Thomas.

"Will you talk with me later tonight?" he asked.

"No," said Thomas succinctly. It was the first time I ever knew him to be brief. Usually one had to mine his meaning out of a gush of words.

"In the morning?" Toledo urged.

"Not in the morning. Not in the afternoon. Not at any time in the future, my friend. To urge a conference upon me is a confession of weakness, of uncertainty. You, my good competitor, have been abysmally stupid. I am averse to associating myself with crass stupidity. A very good evening to you, sir."

Toledo surged to his feet. There was the pallor of rage beneath his coat of tan.

"You'll be sending to me," he said between his teeth, "and I promise to kick your messenger in the teeth." He turned vindictive eyes upon me, but did not speak. Then he shrugged his magnificent shoulders and strode away.

"Thees gentleman," said Iturbe softly, "is of a disposition not agreeable."

William George Thomas smiled a baby's smile. "He is a gentleman of culture, a critic of the art of painting whose judgment is sought. The shoemaker should stick to his last. There are, my friends, varying degrees of adroitness. There is that perfect finesse which stands at the head of the list. In it is no emotion, but only cold intellect. The lowest form of all is animal cunning, which, in emergency, may confuse brain with muscle and resort to violence. Our friend Toledo possesses a modicum of animal cunning. It has sufficed to gain for him a reputation in certain quarters."

He turned his pig eyes upon me. "But, my young friend, he is not to be underrated. Especially when he is very stupid he must be considered with care. I recommend caution to you, Doctor Gimp."

"Should I also be wary of you, Mr. Thomas?"

He was not offended. "You are thinking of the note to Miss du Gueslin which you so adroitly prevented me from recovering." He nodded to Senor Iturbe.

"Sometime," he said with amusement, "I shall tell you how neatly Doctor Gimp outwitted me. . . . No, doctor, you need not be wary of me in the sense that you should be wary of our friend Toledo."

"Yet Miss du Gueslin is dead," I said.

THE big man said softly, "Is it not possible that if Miss du Gueslin had read and heeded the words of that note she might still be alive to ply her interesting avocation? But we are rude. We talk of matters of no interest to my other honored guest."

"I listened," Senor Iturbe said.

"Did you," I asked, changing the subject to one more calculated to be of interest to our Mexican friend, apprehend the man who threw the knife?"

"Oh, yes," he said easily. "Almost at once. He is not a nice person who will throw knives at anyone for a few pesos."

"I think," said Mr. Thomas, "that it would be the part of wisdom for me to eschew a town where that service can be hired so cheaply." He smiled broadly. "I do not present a difficult mark." He stirred in his wheelchair. "We have dined excellently; we have enjoyed both good and dubious companionship. It has been a complete evening. Nothing can be added to that which is complete."

"And I," I agreed, "must rise early."

"Then shall we say, till we meet again?"

We moved to the door of the dining-room, I propelling William George Thomas' chair. There we said good-night. As I left the hotel I was not displeased to note that the young man in the neat blue suit was sauntering along behind me.

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The research for which I had been sent to White Sands concerned only indirectly the operation of a jet-propelled engine, but rather the complicated electronic devices by which a missile propelled by such an engine could be controlled and directed in flight.

My problems concerned especially navigating that missile so that it would, for example, reach the planet Mars instead of Saturn. Or, in less magniloquent terms, to reach Moscow instead of missing that target by fifty miles.

Numerous minds in the field of electronics had produced this brain. Our task was further to improve that brain or to perfect it. Its details were the most jealously guarded secret of White Sands. Its secrets were coveted by an inimical foreign power. We knew that Russia would expend any treasure or toss away any number of human lives to wrest it from us.

Major Van Tuyl was convinced, as I, myself, was alarmingly certain, that the various melodramatic events in which I had been concerned were all parts of a plan, skilfully conceived and adroitly carried forward, to abstract an electronic brain and to place it in the hands of Moscow.

"More and more," he said to me grimly, "it emerges that you are elected to be the goat."

"An unenviable position to occupy," said I.

"The sweet spot in the whole mess," he said, "is that they have no idea you know you're the bait. I hope—for your sake."

"Why for my sake, major?"

"Because," he said, "so long as they keep on believing you're just a sap-headed scientist, you're too valuable to damage," he grinned. "But," he went on, "the minute they discover that you're being used as a lump of sugar for their flies to light on"—he made an unpleasantly suggestive gesture, drawing his finger across his throat—"I wouldn't write insurance on you for a thin dime."

"That," I said, "seems to give you gruesome satisfaction."

"Not so, doc. I'm impressing you. Yeah. The more firmly you can convince them you're a guileless nincompoop the longer we'll have you with us. Not," he said half under his breath, "that you'll have to be a magnificent actor."

"I may," said I severely, "be a nincompoop and guileless, but I haven't shied away from accepting the risks involved."

"Doctor," he said, not at all apologetically, "Even a nincompoop can be a hero, if the wind's in the right direction."

"I'm not a hero," I said testily.

He shrugged. "I wouldn't know," he said. "Most heroes I've known were young fools who had good luck in the pinch."

"Except the dead ones," I observed.

"You got a point," he said.

I walked to the laboratory. Presently Melinna Brown came into my office and perched on a corner of my desk.

"All research and no monkeyshines," she said, "make Thomas Alva a dull boy."

"In the laboratory," said I, "a trifle more respect is indicated."

"This," she retorted, "is an interlude."

"For what purpose?" I asked.

"The day after tomorrow is Sunday," she said.

"Of that I am aware."

"Six of us," she said, "are going for a sort of picnic over in the Organ Mountains. There will be Commander Pettingill and his wife, Mr. Knowlton and Miss Wilkins and me."

"That is five," said I.

"And you," she said with an impertinent grin.

"No," I said promptly.

"Yes," she said with equal promptness. "I suggest that you stay here over Saturday night. We will make an early start Sunday morning. We will meddle with flora and fauna, to say nothing of beefsteaks."

"But I——" I commenced somewhat weakly.

"I knew you'd be delighted," she said, and hopped off my desk.

When she was gone, I considered the matter and found the idea not unattractive. Indeed, a day in the open might prove a welcome break in my routine, which was confining. A diversion of this kind, in the company of Melinna Brown, might be enjoyable. I found myself anticipating it with some pleasure.

So it was that I slept in White Sands on Saturday night after dining in the officers' club with Melinna and accompanying her to an absurd motion picture in which criminals and a detective shot weapons at each other endlessly and an idiotic young woman was rescued from a predicament in which

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a moron could not have entangled herself.

In the morning early we drove out of the town on the Las Cruces road, which, after crossing the desert, climbed rather windingly and steeply over the mountains to the little city 26 miles away.

We were rather crowded in the car which Melinna had somehow obtained from the car pool. After an ascent we found a suitable spot for parking, and the Commander, who seemed familiar with the terrain, led us back from the road and down into a small canyon floored with sand which was to be our headquarters for the day. We amused ourselves by constructing a crude fireplace in which to broil our steaks and in stretching a square of canvas as protection against the sun.

These chores completed, Melinna Brown said to me in rather a pointed manner, "Let's you and I go and scramble."

"Don't get lost," said the Commander's wife amiably. Don't break a leg, and look out for rattlers."

I would have preferred to remain sedentary, but Melinna was disturbingly energetic.

We set off down the canyon, and after a time Melinna manifested a desire to climb. It was indeed a scramble. We reached the top of a low ridge. Before us the mountains arose grim and forbidding. The prospect was one of inclement rocks, of sparse vegetation—an arid, humbled wasteland. Melinna seemed tireless. I knew it would be useless to protest. She did, at last, consent to sit down upon a flat rock, and I stretched at her feet.

"You're panting," she said. "You're out of condition."

"I am not," I said, "a mountain goat."

"Wouldn't it," she asked, "be comical if we got lost and all White Sands had to turn out and comb the mountains for us?"

"It would," I said severely, "be humiliating."

She seemed very young and childish somehow. Even her face did not seem to be that of a mature woman, but of an elfin little girl—rather a naughty, mischievous brat. She bewildered me. At one time she would be the completely competent and sexless laboratory assistant; at another time she would be an alluring woman of the world, meticulously groomed and sophisticated; at another time, as now, she would be completely gamine. It was not easy to keep abreast of her moods or of her several outward appearances.

"Well," she said, her eyes crinkled, "here we are a thousand miles from anywhere. Aren't you going to make a pass?"

It chanced that I was familiar with this bit of argot. I was shocked.

"You," said I severely, "don't know what you're saying."

"Why do you think I dragged you away off here in the hills?"

"I am amazed," I said.

"Well, aren't you?" she demanded.

"I certainly," said I, "am not going to make a pass."

"How very uncomplimentary!" she exclaimed. "After all the trouble I've been to—and skinning my knees!"

"Miss Brown!" I said severely, my intention being to speak seriously to her of the impropriety of her words. But she interrupted me.

"I just wanted to find out," she said, "I mean, if you harbor a quart or two of red corpuscles. Up to and including now, you haven't even tried to hold my hand. Let alone kiss me goodnight. So I just positively have to find out if you're equipped with jet propulsion or if they left out a combustion chamber when they built you."

"My respect for you, Miss Brown——" I began formally, when she interrupted again.

"Oh!" she said in a hopeless tone. "Listen to instruction. Maybe you can't assimilate it, but here are a few basic facts: Just because a man makes a pass doesn't mean he'll get anywhere. Point Number Two: if a man fails to make a pass, a girl gets the idea something is wrong about her. Point Three: if a man neglects to make a pass, a girl knows there's something wrong with him."

I was firm. "Definitely I have no intention of taking advantage of you in circumstances——"

"Give ear, friend. When anybody takes advantage of me, it's after I've made full arrangements to be taken advantage of. I deduce that you're hopeless. This has been a piece of necessary research. I guess I've found the answer. You're not a missile at all. You're just a dummy model—for exhibition purposes . . . Let's go scramble some more."

She sprang to her feet and I followed, feeling that somehow I had proved myself inadequate. I had failed to rise to the occasion. But she had misjudged me. The real point was that, when the time came for me to make a pass or other demonstration of admiration and affection, I would make it under my own power and not as the result of any provocative overtures on the part of the female. For that I would select my own place, time, and method.

I could assume from the carriage of her shoulders that she was disgruntled. She marched forward with chin in the air, but it did not add materially when she stumbled over a stone and would have fallen on her nose had I not caught and supported her.

She shook off my hand testily. She was not heading back toward the place where we had erected the fireplace, but was trudging morosely farther back into the mountains. I knew she would manifest stubbornness should I make a suggestion, so I remained mute.

FOR some time we proceeded in an unsocial manner. Then she paused, lifting her nose to sniff. She looked at me with an inquiring little gesture, exactly as if there had been no unpleasantness between us. Her mood had changed again with inexplicable swiftness.

"I smell smoke," she said.

"Maybe our friends have started the fire," I said.

"The wind's in the wrong direction. It's ahead somewhere."

I frowned. "Who else would be building a fire in these mountains? Could it be one of Major Van Tuyl's patrols?"

"I think," she said gravely, "that the research department should research."

"That's Van Tuyl's business," I told her. "If it's someone who has no right to be here, they might become unpleasant."

"Afraid?" she asked.

"Yes," I answered.

"Always a good idea," she smiled. "It makes for caution."

I stood sniffing. There was a distinct aroma of wood smoke. The slight breeze was carrying it to our noses down the ravine upon whose floor we walked.

"We're Injuns," she said, delighted with her idea. "We slink."

We proceeded, treading cautiously. The ravine veered sharply to the left. It ceased to be a ravine and became a canyon with perpendicular, towering walls, a box canyon. As noiselessly as we could contrive, we approached its gateway, concealing ourselves among huge boulders. There was a slight rise in the ground up which we climbed.

From its top we could look down into the narrow box canyon, and there, not a hundred feet away, was a wood fire and the aroma of coffee and bacon. Beside the fire, squatting on their heels, were two men in the crude habiliments of prospectors. They were bearded, unkempt. Standing against a rock were two rifles.

Melinna put her lips close to my ear. "The old prospectors," she said. She was about to disclose herself, but I gripped her arms and drew her back.

Sounds carried in that constricted space. We could hear distinctly the little noises of their movements as they poured coffee into tin cups and removed sizzling bacon from the pan. They ate without speaking to each other, while we watched hungrily.

Melinna looked at me with a little questioning smile. She saw no reason why we should not disclose ourselves to a couple of weatherbeaten prospectors whose presence inside the limits of the proving grounds had been sanctioned by authority. But somehow I was not at ease. Unbidden, the recollection came to me of the dead man with the shaven face that I had discovered yonder in the desert.

It was true that some of Major Van Tuyl's men had investigated and reported that it could not be one of the prospectors, because both of them were visible in their usual haunts. Nevertheless, I heard a tocsin ring a warning.

My suspicions were quickened when the taller of the two men reared to his feet and extracted a cigarette-case from his trousers pocket. The sun gleamed on silver. The man lighted a cigarette and a pungent odor came downwind. It was a Turkish cigarette.

It would have been unnatural for an old prospector to smoke a cigarette, unless it were one he rolled himself. One would have taken a pipe for granted. But a Turkish cigarette! And a silver case! That was too much.

There was nothing about the other, smaller man to cause me to think him spurious. He was the first to speak, and then not in the Western vernacular which one would have expected. His accent was thick, guttural, foreign. It did not seem to me to be German. In spite of his pronunciation, he struck me as being an educated man; his English was fluent, his sentences correctly formed. It was only that the words were spoken by an alien tongue.

"You assure me," he said, "that it will be not many days."

"I can't tell how many. We can't hurry things."

"True. We must not be careless now. But it is not comfortable in these mountains."

"You'll be able to be comfortable all the rest of your life," answered the taller man. "We'll turn the thumbscrews this week."

Melinna's fingers dug into my arm. I looked sidewise at her. Her cheeks were pale, her lips parted, her eyes seemed inclined to start from her head.

"The fat one," said the smaller of the two. "I fear him more than all these security guards, than the FBI."

"He will be taken care of."

"You failed in Juarez."

"Putrid luck," answered the taller man.

"Take care he does not have better luck than you. That pachyderm! Once, in Spain, he balked me. Once, in Iran, he all but had me murdered. That one

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is not to be laughed away."

The taller man shrugged. "Confound this underbrush," he said. "On a hot day like this it is unbearable."

His hands went to his tangled beard. With a little effort that thicket of whiskers came away from his chin and left his face exposed. They would have deceived anyone no matter how keen his eyes. A work of art. This disguise had been fashioned and applied by a skilled hand.

Again Melinna's fingers dug into my arm painfully. An exclamation of astonishment almost was wrung from my own lips. For the face that was disclosed in that bright noonday sun was the face of a Greek god. The features were those of Balthasar Toledo.

"Put that thing on again," the guttural man said sharply. "If you are careless when there is no danger, there may come a time when, you are not cautious with danger present. Act always as if spying eyes were upon you."

Toledo snarled a reply. He fitted on his beard again and the guttural man helped and scrutinised until he was satisfied it had become again a perfect work of art.

"Never again," the man went on. "When a part is played, never for an instant abandon that role. It is not efficient." He paused and frowned at Toledo. "Even you," he said grimly, "are expendable."

"You threaten me!" said Toledo.

"I caution," said the guttural man. "So now you return to El Paso, openly. The more often you are seen, the more they become used to you. Now we will go."

They gathered the several articles of their equipment, shouldered their rifles, and passed within fifty feet of where we crouched. I was afraid the sound of my breathing might reach their ears. A slight movement, the overturning of a pebble, might betray us, and I was not so fatuous as to think, if we should be discovered, that we should ever reach White Sands again.

But they trudged away unconscious of our presence. I maintained a firm grip upon Melinna's arm and we crouched there in silence for so long a time that I was assured it would be safe to move. Even then I was determined upon caution. I did not stand erect, but peered about me over the rim of the rock that sheltered us, to make sure Toledo and his companion had, in actuality, gone away. And then I compelled Melinna to remain hidden while I crept away from the box canyon and peered down the ravine in the direction they had taken.

Having assured myself so far as was possible, I returned to Melinna.

"Walk softly," I said. I quoted the words of the guttural man: "'If you are careless when there is no danger' —"

"Toledo!" she said.

"Precisely."

"But he—he made passes at me," she muttered.

"You might have been useful to him," I told her.

"No," she said. "Not that altogether. He—he fell for me. That was real. He was jealous. He was troublesome." She seemed appalled. "I've been made love to by a murderer."

"You mean the real prospectors?"

"Of course," she said shortly. And then, "I want a bath."

"That nude body we found. The corpse shaved after death. One o prospectors," I said.

"So," Melinna said, "they could establish an advance post within arm's reach of White Sands."

We were picking our way with what rapidity we could manage toward the rendezvous with the remainder of our party.

"No word to them, if you please," I warned her. "This is for Major Van Tuyl."

"Of course," she assented.

It was a relief to rejoin our friends, and it was a relief to them to have us appear. They had felt anxiety. The midday meal had been delayed for our benefit, and we sat about the fire eating with good appetite.

I was no longer in a holiday mood, and even Melinna was subdued. My desire was to get back to headquarters and consult Major Van Tuyl, but it would be difficult to break up the party without creating a situation and informing our friends that something of an untoward nature had happened. Therefore we amused ourselves in various juvenile ways until the afternoon waned.

IT was approaching dusk when we arrived again in the town. We dropped off our companions at our quarters, turned our automobile back to the car pool and walked to headquarters. It was our good fortune that Major Van Tuyl had been detained in his office by paper work, and he received us with no outward manifestations of pleasure.

"Well, doc?" he said. "What now? Every time you show up it's trouble. Whose body have you found this time?"

"A pair," I said, "of very live bodies." He turned saturnine eyes upon Melinna. "Where does she fit into this?" he demanded. "She's another body finder."

"You're wondering," she said, "if Doctor Gimp has been indiscreet."

"I could be wondering just that," Van Tuyl said.

"When he was made," Melinna said in a disgusted tone, "indiscreet was left out of his cosmos."

"Was it left out of yours?" His eyes were hard as they bored into hers. "I've been meaning to ask you," he said. "What's your tie-up with William George Thomas?"

She darted an accusing glance at me. I felt myself flushing. One does not relish being caught at tale-bearing.

"The accused stood mute," she answered.

"I can jerk you up as a security risk," he threatened.

"You'd better jerk up some of your own men as blind or incompetent," she said tartly. It was a characteristic feminine manoeuvre of answering an inconvenient question with an irrelevant accusation. "They don't look under whiskers."

"Under whose whiskers?" he asked.

"Prospectors' whiskers," she said, and it was evident she had diverted him. "After we found that shaved corpse," she said, "you sent some of your people to see if he was one of our two miners back in the Organs."

"Yes. They reported both men O.K."

"But they didn't test the whiskers—say by giving them a good hard tug."

"No."

"They'd have been surprised," she said.

Major Van Tuyl turned sharply to me. "What's she talking about?" he snapped.

"I will be more explicit," I said. "We went on a picnic today. In the course of it, Miss Brown and I wandered off alone. We scrambled some distance into the mountains. The odor of smoke became noticeable. It aroused our curiosity. In a box canyon we saw two bearded men cooking over a fire."

"We scrooched down among the rocks," Melinna interrupted again.

"Presently," I continued, "one of them found his beard uncomfortable and removed it."

"What?" demanded Van Tuyl loudly.

"The face underneath," I said, "was that of a man named Balthasar Toledo. The other man, who seemed to be his superior, reprimanded him. This other man was a foreigner—an educated foreigner. I took him to be a Slav."

Van Tuyl waited for me to continue. "Toledo," I said, "was about to return to El Paso." I paused here and glanced at Melinna. "They were," said I, "apprehensive of William George Thomas. The guttural man, in effect, ordered Toledo to remove him."

"As they tried to do in Juarez," Melinna said. "So now you can go and pick them up."

"No," I said emphatically.

Van Tuyl fixed me with very shrewd eyes. "Why not pick them up?" he asked.

"On what charge?" I asked.

"Murder," said Melinna.

"Or threat to security," added Major Van Tuyl.

"No," I repeated.

"Who gives orders here?" Van Tuyl demanded.

"You do," I said, "but I hope they will be wise orders. Why," I asked, "have Toledo and the Slav established themselves inside the proving ground?"

"To spy," said Van Tuyl.

"Nonsense," I answered sharply.

"All right, Mr. Mental Prodigy, why?"

"As a receiving station," I answered. "A handy receiving station for stolen goods. One that would not be suspected. One from which a couple of investigated old prospectors would be able to remove the stolen goods to a designation. Mexico is indicated."

"What stolen goods?" asked Van Tuyl.

"The only thing," I said, "that would justify so elaborate a plot. The one thing above everything else in White Sands that the enemy covets. The electronic brain."

"So," asked Van Tuyl, "what wise orders should I issue?"

"None," said I, "that would betray your knowledge. None that could warn the plotters, whoever they may be. You can arrest Toledo and his companion. What do you accomplish? Conviction of murder, possibly. Or of illegal presence within the proving ground." I shook my head.

"They would only turn to other devices, send other agents. It would seem to me," I continued, "that your objective should be to smash the plot and apprehend all, not a couple, of the plotters."

"Major," said Melinna pertly, "the doctor is quite a figure-outer!"

"You start," said I, "with this advantage. If the brain should be stolen, you know where it will be taken. Enabling you to take correct precautions."

"Just how," he asked with some sarcasm, "do you think these people can get at the electronic brain, our most carefully guarded secret? How do you think they could sneak it through our cordon of security? You can't carry a can of sardines past our guards without accounting for it."

"I think it could be done," I said.

"Maybe the Russians better retain you for the job," he snorted.

"I conceive," said I, "that I have been selected for that chore."

"Now, doctor!" Major Van Tuyl said, as if speaking indulgently to a child.

"Examine all the facts known to you, Major Van Tuyl. You will—probably you already have — reach the same conclusion."

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"Continue," he said icily.

"A situation might arise," said I, "in which it would be efficient for you to permit me to abstract the brain."

He smiled thinly. "Do you, perhaps, realise that any such action on your part would come close to treason?"

"I have considered that," I answered. "That you might be accused of being a traitor to your country."

"That danger," I said, "is inherent."

"You would take that risk?"

It was an unhappy moment, but it had to be met. "It seems," said I, "to be an emergency in which even a man's good name could be expendable."

"You advise?" he asked shortly.

"That you do nothing to put them on their guard."

"I shall have to confer. I shall have to consult my superiors and the FBI."

"Naturally," I answered.

"And if they agree to this waiting game?"

"In that case," I told him, "it seems to me the best procedure is to continue to let the bleating of the kid attract the tiger."

"Doc," said Van Tuyl, "you're either a fool or quite a warrior."

Melinna's eyes were dark and deep with some emotion which I could not define. She reached out her arm and touched my hand lightly.

"Major Van Tuyl," she said rather formally, "my theory is that he is a little of both."

"Miss Brown," he said with even greater formality, "you have, through circumstances, been permitted to listen to matters that you should not have heard. Do you realise that I could order you to be taken into protective custody where you couldn't talk?"

She looked at him with level eyes. "Do you think that is necessary?" she asked.

He returned her gaze, and then his thin lips contorted themselves in a smile. "Somehow," he said, "I think it will be unnecessary. Now scram! Both of you. I've got to talk to sane and important people. No more time for a pair of screwballs. Scram!"

* * * * *

I had spent the evening with a member of our scientific staff and his pleasant wife. The time had passed quickly—not, possibly, for my hostess—in a discussion of homing systems. Certain complexities are involved which could offer little of interest to the ordinary female mind. Certainly it was not social chitchat.

We had commenced our discussions with a definition of homing systems and a fixation of terms to be employed. Namely, that a homing system in a guided missile is a control device inside the missile itself by means of which the direction of the rocket can be altered in flight to pursue its target.

We discussed the relative merits of active, passive, and semi-active homing systems with respect to their efficiency in defending against an attack by enemy aeroplanes or missiles, and at various points the discussion became almost heated.

I was still reviewing our arguments as I inserted my key in the door of the apartment. I thrust open the door and fumbled for the light switch. Sudden illumination dispelled the darkness, and to my astonishment and alarm I saw two individuals occupying the most comfortable of my chairs. One of these persons held a pistol which he pointed in my direction.

"Close the door silently, doctor, and step inside," said the shorter of the two men.

I stood just over the threshold peering at the two intruders. The one who had spoken, in an almost feminine voice of undoubted culture, was Chinese. He was slender, dressed with expensive taste to the point of foppishness. His face was not forbidding, but genial. I suppose that in his own land he would have been considered handsome by the ladies.

The other man—the one who held the pistol—was his direct antithesis. He was a crude person with a flattened nose and small eyes, and clothing that might have been purchased in a second-hand store. His figure was squat, with broad shoulders and thick hands with nails bitten to the quick.

"We hope," said the Chinese, "that we did not startle you."

"I admit," I replied, "that I am nonplussed. How did you gain admission?"

"My companion," replied the Chinese, "knows about locks." He bowed slightly from the waist. "My name, doctor, is Worthington Ken." He smiled politely.

"Do not expect amenities from my companion," he said apologetically. "He has not enjoyed cultural advantages. In addition to which, he is dumb. I do not mean mentally. He was born without the power of speech."

I was striving to compose myself. To walk into one's home and find it occupied by strangers, one of whom exhibits a lethal weapon, does not make for perfect composure. In order to give myself time to resume my habitual mental equilibrium, I resorted to pointless conversation.

"I am an admirer," said I, "of the art of the Chinese people, particularly their ceramics."

"It is gracious of you to say so, doctor. I am an admirer of the material and scientific accomplishments of the United States."

I felt a reservation. "But not," I asked, "of our imponderables—our philosophy?"

"This humble one," he answered, "was honored by being permitted to accompany the Eighth Route Army on its immortal march. It was an ideology inimical to yours that moved me to undergo the hardships involved."

"Then," said I, "you are a Communist."

"If you are to employ that term," he said.

"But," said I, "you have assimilated in speech, in education, in dress, our Occidental civilisation."

"Our great philosopher, Ling Po," he answered gravely, "has observed that one may not know the owner of a house by looking at the wall surrounding the garden."

THE dumb man made impatient animal sounds. Mr. Ken raised a monitory hand.

"If my companion is uncouth you will forgive," he said. He smiled again. "Even his name is uncouth. He is called Bubble Mouth."

"Now," said I, "may I be informed of the purpose of your call?"

"It is unpleasant," said Mr. Ken. "We come to apply pressure. We have enjoyed an intensive education in the art of applying pressure. We were called in for that purpose by our client. Ling Po also has said that the grape does not yield its wine save under the pressure of trampling feet."

"You have been retained," I asked, "to frighten me or, if I fail to respond to duress, to take more violent action?"

"To our infinite regret," said Mr. Ken.

Again the person grotesquely named Bubble Mouth made inarticulate sounds. Mr. Ken shook his head apologetically. "Ling Po also said," he informed me, "that if one is not possessed of a screwdriver with which to sink a screw, he must crudely avail himself of a hammer. Bubble Mouth is my crude hammer. Please forgive him."

"Suppose now," I said, "we come to the point."

"Good manners," said Mr. Ken, "frown upon abruptness. However, sir, I recognise that you will be impatient. I state a fact—namely, that a young lady of beauty named Renee du Guesclin was recently deprived of life."

"True," I said. Somehow it did not seem to me to be possible that this outwardly courtly Chinese gentleman could be dangerous to me. His uncouth companion was more terrifying. His dumbness and the animal sounds he emitted added to this unpleasant impression. As I peered at him, it seemed to me he exhibited terrifying potentialities of brutality.

"Our client," said Mr. Ken in his soft feminine voice, "authorises us to inform you that he is in a position to assure your conviction for that crime."

"That," said I, "I cannot believe."

"Among other things," Mr. Ken said, "he states that he is able to produce the young woman who served dinner to you and Miss du Guesclin. She will be able to identify you. With other evidence available, your conviction will be certain."

The bleating of the kid had indeed attracted the tiger!

The one advantage that rested with me was that these men and their employer believed themselves to be dealing with an unworldly scientist—which possibly I was—who had been suffering from terror since the night of Miss du Guesclin's murder. They would be assured of my ignorance of any counterplot in which I was to be the cat's paw.

They would believe that I would be vulnerable, and they could not know that all the facts of that dire night had been placed by me in the possession of Major Van Tuyl and the FBI. It would be their belief that I would fall a ready victim to blackmail.

It was essential, I conceived, that they should not be disabused of this certainty. To add to their confidence, it would be adroit for me to show apprehension.

"But" I protested, "I did not kill Miss du Guesclin. I assure you I did not."

"'It is more difficult,' says Ling Po, 'for accused innocence to disprove guilt than for the criminal to pull wool over the eyes of the judge.' I fear, in your case, that innocence will not avail."

"Do you mean—you cannot mean!—that you would be parties to the conviction of an innocent man?"

"One of the tenets of the ideology which I profess—Communism—is that moral standards cannot prevail where advantage to the cause may be obtained. It is required of us that we be amoral. In the birthplace of Communism many innocent men have been sacrificed on the altar of expediency."

"But in this land," I said, "innocent men never are convicted."

"Oh, doctor," said Mr. Ken regretfully, "you are so mistaken. I could cite instances. Indeed, I myself have been instrumental in the conviction of innocent men."

"Why—why did you come here?" I asked in a shaken voice. "Why are you doing this to me? I have never harmed a soul knowingly. In what manner can I have aroused the anger of Communism?"

"Now, doctor, now! Communism is not inspired by pointless malice. We came to request a favor—a slight favor we thought you might be stubborn about granting. If a door will not yield to gentle pressure it must be broken."

"What—what," I asked timorously, "are you trying to force me to do?"

"Why, doctor, a thing not difficult

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You occupy a very fine and honorable position. A position of trust. A most interesting position, which—shall we say—gives you a high value to our client."

"I occupy," said I, "a position of trust and responsibility."

"So accurate!" said Mr. Ken. "So well stated. A position which places you above suspicion. In this so carefully guarded area, in the White Sands Proving Ground, you can move about at will. You can see and touch and lift. That is true, is it not?"

"To a certain point that is true."

"Let us become hypothetical," he said. "Let us suppose that there existed some quite small object—an object easy to transport. This object is most carefully guarded. Let us further suppose that our client wishes to gain possession of this object. With all the security precautions, guards, identifying badges, it would be quite impossible for one not vouched for to gain entrance to the area, and doubly impossible for him to emerge with the coveted object in his possession."

"It would be impossible," I agreed.

"But not impossible for you," said Mr. Ken. "If, then, you were given a choice between abstracting something from White Sands and being convicted and executed for a murder you did not commit! If such a choice were laid before you, doctor! As a wise man, a man of intelligence, would you not incline to compliance?"

"Look here," I protested. "Be specific. What are you trying to force me to do?"

"There is, we are definitely informed, a device known as the electronic brain. Our client wishes to possess one of these inventions."

"To give it to communist Russia!" I exclaimed in an appalled voice.

He ignored my exclamation. "It can be carried in a commodious suitcase," he said definitely.

"That," said I, "is highly classified information."

"Little information is kept from us," Mr. Ken said with smugness.

I was striving to think clearly, to determine what course to follow. Suspicion would be aroused if I failed to appear reluctant—to be outraged at a demand that I abstract and turn over to enemy hands the electronic brain. I must protest.

"Do you," I demanded loudly in an angry, excited voice, "realise that what you are suggesting is tantamount to treason?"

"A word," said Mr. Ken soothingly, "a mere word, and I may add, doctor, that we would guarantee that you reached sanctuary across the border in Mexico."

"My answer is no," I said, but not too firmly.

"I feared you might prove stubborn, with mistaken ideas of patriotism, insular ideas. But consider yourself, doctor. You cannot wish to stand before a judge and jury who would surely convict you. The difference, doctor, between being convicted of murder and being accused of treason is that a murderer goes to prison for life or is executed. One accused of treason escapes to a comfortable, well-rewarded and anonymous haven abroad."

"Nothing," I said firmly, "nothing could compel me to betray my country."

The man Bubble Mouth was becoming increasingly restive. He grimaced and babbled. Mr. Ken restrained him with an imperative gesture.

I was bringing to bear upon the problem every resource of my intelligence. I was estimating the situation from their point of view. They would not expect me to surrender easily. Indeed, I did not believe they would expect me to surrender at this first demand. To their way of thinking, I was hooked, but it would be incredible if I failed to fight against the hook. A man who has been a decent, law-abiding citizen does not toss aside all he has been brought up to respect and admire in an instant. Not even under duress.

The more determined my initial struggle, the more natural my conduct would be. Reason told me not to fear for my life. I would be useless to them if I were dead. I resolved to be emphatic.

BEFORE I could speak, Mr. Ken said smoothly, as if an afterthought had occurred to him, "There's another point, sir. There is considerable gossip about you, doctor. About your private life. Shall I say your love life? Though that crude expression may be premature. We learn that your affections are engaged. That there is a young lady who is precious to you."

"Nonsense," I said. "I have no such entanglement."

"We are informed otherwise," Mr. Ken said. He spread his hands. "Unfortunately, we are not permitted to be chivalrous. To us, human beings are merely creatures who are useful or useless. We do not consider sex. I mean to say that sex cannot be a protection."

This Mr. Ken was an incredible human being, suave, dapper, ostentatiously polite. But somehow he made me shudder. He was not inhuman in the way that Bubble Mouth was inhuman, not bestial. His was, rather, an intellectual inhumanity, as if he conceived himself to be above good or evil.

"The lady's name," said he, "is Miss Melinna Brown. Very, very attractive. A lovely butterfly who emerges from her chrysalis at night."

"What," I asked, "has Miss Brown to do with this matter?"

"You might call her an added inducement," said Mr. Ken gently. "Though she is an innocent bystander, it is possible for an innocent bystander to suffer damage. Sometimes it is profitable to damage an innocent bystander—which you would desire so greatly to avert. Oh, yes, doctor, you could so easily ensure Miss Brown's safety and happiness. You could also become a hazard in her path. Miss Brown's safety is in the nature of an added pressure."

"Am I to understand," I demanded, "that you are actually threatening harm to Melinna Brown if I decline to betray my country?"

I had not been angry before. I had been appalled by these fearsome men, but I had not been angry at them. I had observed and listened with interest, as belonging to a species I never had observed before. But now, unaccountably, something shook me; something welled up within me of a sort I never before had experienced.

Not once before in my life had I lusted to attack a man, much less kill him. But now, in a twinkling, everything was blotted out in a red desire to kill.

It is fortunate that I am well balanced, not given to moments of emotional instability. Almost at once my blind passion subsided and I was able to think with clarity and efficiency. But I was still angry, with a cold instead of a hot anger. I was even able to wonder why a threatening reference to Melinna Brown should have affected me almost to explosive, hysterical action.

I did find myself, however, in a state of mind which would not be satisfied unless I expressed my self-respect by making my refusal of their proposition emphatic. I did not believe they would shoot me, whatever I said. To do so would admit failure on their part, and bring upon them the censure of their employers.

I arose from the chair in which I had been seated. Bubble Mouth instantly manifested alertness. Mr. Ken smiled in amusement, as at a child.

"Surely, doctor," he said, "you were not planning a breach of hospitality."

I took a provocative step towards Mr. Ken. Both men crouched. Bubble Mouth held his pistol in readiness.

"Now, now, doctor," said Mr. Ken gently. "You surely will not be precipitate." He shook his head warningly. "Bubble Mouth is an adept at the art of pistol whipping."

It was my hope that Bubble Mouth would come close to me. I have been informed that skilful gunmen never allow their victims to come within arm's length. This rule of conduct was not observed by Bubble Mouth. He stepped towards me with animal eagerness, snarling unpleasantly.

"Must we teach you a lesson, doctor?" Mr. Ken said regretfully.

Bubble Mouth thrust forward his pistol so that its muzzle was but inches from my stomach. Quite evidently his purpose was to cow me, having no fear that I would make any defensive movement.

I admit I was troubled. But I am not clumsy and my physical movements are well controlled. As the pistol approached my abdomen, I acted swiftly.

With my left hand I knifed viciously down at Bubble Mouth's wrist, putting all available energy into the blow. He was taken utterly by surprise. It turned him half around and his weapon dropped to the rug. This enabled me to grasp his other wrist in the approved manner, whirl him around and apply that wrestler's grip known as the hammer-lock.

Using him as a battering-ram, I propelled him against Mr. Ken so that his head came into violent contact with the abdomen of the Chinese. The result was that both were on the floor in a momentarily helpless position.

I did not hesitate. I found I was strangely enjoying myself and that my rage possessed me again. They were not overweighty men, and I am large, with considerable strength. Before they could untangle themselves I was able to seize each by the nape of his neck and bring their heads together with a gratifying thump. I indulged myself and thumped their heads a second time.

The result gave me satisfaction that amounted to exultation. Bubble Mouth and Mr. Ken lay side by side on the rug and made no effort to move. I found I was guilty of a desire to kick them in the ribs, a quite uncivilised impulse which I restrained.

I did, however, pick up Bubble Mouth's pistol, and, thrusting my hand inside Mr. Ken's coat, I found a second weapon in a shoulder holster, of which I possessed myself. Then I opened the door into the hall. Returning to my victims I seized each by the collar and dragged them outside, propelling them in the direction of the stairs.

After which I saw to it that my door was locked, and dropped into my chair in a condition of limpness, but well pleased with myself.

I felt the need of a stimulant and

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supplied the need. The weakness in my knees passed presently. I disrobed and retired, placing the two captured weapons under my pillow. Such was my excited state that I did not fall immediately to sleep.

As I lay wakeful I did some introspection. Among other things, I asked myself a question: Why had a threat of violence to Melinna Brown thrown me into a blind rage of a sort that I had not hitherto believed myself capable of experiencing?

It would have been apparent to a far less discerning mind than mine that matters were approaching a crisis. I suppose that in all human endeavors, be they scientific research or criminal plottings or international wrestling, a moment arrives when all hangs in the balance.

This affair, in which I was inextricably enmeshed, was swiftly moving towards its climax, and I was afraid.

Suddenly my telephone rang. A voice, deep, musical, beautiful in its cadences, asked, "Doctor Gimp, what happened in your apartment just now? It is imperative that I should know."

"On the other hand, it is not, Mr. Thomas," I answered, "imperative that I should tell you."

"Without violation of your obligation of secrecy," said the fat man, "you can answer the questions I shall ask."

"Suppose you ask them first," I replied. "Then I can decide for myself if they may be answered."

"Did two men—a Chinese and a man without the power of speech—call upon you tonight?"

"I found them waiting for me when I opened my door."

"A suave Chinese who quoted Ling Po?"

"Named Worthington Ken," I said.

"Did he make demands upon you?"

"No reply," I answered.

"Was my name mentioned?"

"It was not," I informed him.

"Something happened to those two men," he said. "Something incredible. Can you tell me what it was?"

"Why, sir," I told him, "they exasperated me to a point where I found it expedient to disarm them, rap their heads soundly together and throw them out of my apartment."

"The age of miracles has not passed!" he exclaimed. "I was right," he added as if speaking to himself, "in not underestimating you, doctor. I inform you, sir, that tonight you have coped with the two most capably dangerous men I ever have encountered."

In spite of myself, I liked the repulsive man who was speaking to me. I did not understand him, nor know what was his place in the events which were occurring. But I found him not repulsive to me, save physically. That odd feeling of attraction moved me to speak when, perhaps, I should have maintained silence. But I could not let him go unwarned.

"Mr. Thomas," I said, "I advise you to take precautions for your safety."

"Meaning what?"

"That the man who procured the throwing of the knife at your back over in Juarez is determined to repeat the attempt upon your life with grim determination to succeed."

"Could you name that man?"

"His name," said I, "is Balthasar Toledo, an art dealer."

"An art dealer indeed!" he exclaimed. Then, after a pause, "I do not comprehend how you know what you seem to know. Men have perished because of less dangerous knowledge. I hope you will be more fortunate."

"Our hopes coincide," I answered.

"I have my faults, Doctor Gimp," he said, "but ingratitude is not one of them. Twice, even three times, you have been of service to me. It may be that in an evil hour I may be able to repay. With one reservation, sir."

"And that?" I asked.

"That," he replied, and I thought regretfully, "if your removal from life became a sad necessity. But I assure you, doctor, that would come only if it could not be avoided. I wish profoundly, my friend, that you had not blundered into this affair."

"I," said I resentfully, "am no blunderer."

"So much the worse," he replied, "for all of us. Good night, doctor. I am obligated to you. As the Spaniards phrase it, 'Go with God.'"

I cannot lay my finger on the reason for it, but in that moment I was more keenly afraid of William George Thomas than I was of the Chinese and Bubble Mouth, of the guttural Slav, of Balthasar Toledo. I liked the man, I admired the man, but I perceived in him an infinite, implacable potentiality for evil.

MELINNA BROWN was among the little knot of people waiting for the bus in the morning. As had become our habit, we occupied the same seat, she beside the window and I on the aisle. Her manner was either restrained or listless—at any rate, for some miles she showed little inclination for conversation. I, myself, had more than enough to think about, and it was some time before I realised that she was deliberately trying to make me uncomfortable.

I determined to give her no satisfaction, but to pretend to be unaware of her mood. It would be a salubrious lesson to her if I impressed her as being wholly unaware that a barrier had been erected between us.

It was not until we approached the administration building that she turned to me brightly and said, "You didn't fool me for a second."

"About what?" I asked.

"About being worried" she said.

"Why should I be worried?" I asked.

"Because I planned it that way," she answered, with a little grimace of self-satisfaction. "Once in a while an application of the silent treatment is good for a man. It makes him quiver."

"I did not quiver," I denied.

She sniffed. "Don't tell me," she said, and then, beaming suddenly, "See you on the bus tonight."

With that, she gathered up her bag and made ready to disembark. I made way for her, handed her down the steps and walked with her to the laboratory. There she went to don the smock which was her daily uniform, and I entered my office. The telephone rang, and it was Major Van Tuyl.

"Can you hop over?" he asked. "I want to show you Exhibit A."

I walked to headquarters and climbed to his office.

"I've had the boys working," he said. "We'll ride over to the Missile Assembly outfit. I want your opinion."

"I was coming to report to you anyhow," I told him.

"Not another caper!" he exclaimed.

"You might call it so," I said, and described last night's events.

"Hold everything!" he said, and wrinkled his eyelids at me. "Let's get this straight. A couple of gunmen were waiting for you last night?"

"Yes," said I. "I'm informed they are very dangerous men."

"One was holding a gun on you?"

"He committed the indiscretion of approaching too close to me," I said.

"So, with a gun practically against your belly, you disarmed him and roughed the pair of them up. Well, well! Maybe you're wasted on science. Maybe you should be doing a man's work . . . Well, the corn seems to be popping."

He said no more while we drove to the building, where we parked the car. Inside, a lieutenant was waiting for us and took us into a sort of machine shop at the left, where he pointed with some pride to a metal container.

"How's that for false whiskers?" he asked.

"Open her up and let the doctor see inside," directed the major.

Inside was what seemed to be a mass of electronic devices, recording instruments, delicate wiring, and the like. I peered down at it, and then glanced inquiringly at Van Tuyl.

"I've seen the electronic brain before," I said.

The lieutenant chuckled. "But never like this," he said. "Give it the once-over."

I knelt and examined the intricate contents of the container. Almost immediately I perceived that something was wrong. It did not make sense. It was a jumble—a skilful jumble, I admit, but to one who had been working daily with the brain, it was nonsense.

"What is this?" I asked.

"How long," countered the major, "would this deceive a layman?"

"Indefinitely."

"How long would it fool a real scientist—an electronics Johnny?"

"If," said I, "he merely glanced at it, it would deceive him. After a careful examination—if he had not been working on this project—he might have his doubts. To be certain, it would be necessary to disassemble."

"And that," said the major gleefully, "will be plenty."

"What is the object of this deception?" I asked.

"To be ready for come what may," he told me . . . "Much obliged, lieutenant. Swell job."

As we were driving back, the major asked me to repeat in as much detail as possible my conversation with the Chinese and Bubble Mouth. At the end, he asked "Can you shoot a hand gun?"

"No," I answered.

"Then it would be no use to give you one," he said. "It might just get you in trouble." He shook his head. "Those boys'll never be lighthearted again until they've evened the score. From now on, it'll be a personal thing with them."

"Are you trying to frighten me?" I asked.

"Yes," he said succinctly, and then, "Repeat that about Miss Brown."

I did so, repeating the exact words. He grinned. It seemed no spot for amusement, but Major Van Tuyl had a peculiar sense of humor.

"It was at that point," he said, "that you came to a boil?"

"Yes," I admitted.

"It's a symptom," he said, chuckling, "that you should study. Maybe it means something. I'll get in touch with the FBI, doc. Miss Brown will be properly chaperoned."

.

For some reason Melinna chose to ride back to El Paso with a young woman from one of the headquarters offices. I occupied a seat with a middle-aged man whose name I did not know. The trip was more tedious than was its wont.

I walked to my apartment, bathed, shaved, and sallied forth to dine alone. After I had eaten, I strolled about the streets for an hour, and then went home to don slippers and robe and made myself comfortable to read a brochure about cosmic rays. This occupied me until nearly eleven o'clock, at which hour I habitually retire.

My pyjamas were on and I was just going to bed when my telephone rang. In the past few days I had come to associate the ringing of my telephone

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with something of an unpleasant or disturbing nature. So now I walked into the other room and lifted the instrument with some trepidation.

"Hello," I said.

"It's Melinna," said a voice in my ear. "Melinna. I'm frightened. Can you come? Can you come in a hurry?"

"Of course," I answered promptly. "Hold the fort. What——"

Her voice did not speak again, but I heard a thump, as if the receiver had been dropped. There were faint, confused sounds and a cry.

"Melinna!" I shouted. "Melinna!" There was no response. Only silence.

There had been something final and conclusive about the thump of Melinna's telephone as it fell. It would be without avail to try to re-establish communication, and if the thing that had happened to Melinna had to do with the threat made to me by the Chinese, then it would require more than my unaided efforts to amend it. I lifted the telephone.

"Central," I said urgently, "this is an emergency call." I gave her the number of the field office of the FBI. "I want speed."

She gave me swift service. Almost instantly I was connected. I wasted no words. "This is Doctor Gimp," I said. "Send men at once to the apartment of Melinna Brown." I gave the address. "Something dire has happened."

Then I ran into my bedroom. I pulled on clothes over my pyjamas, donned socks and shoes, and not even pausing to take my hat, I ran down the stairs and continued to run along the street, hoping to find a cruising taxicab. I did not find one. My headlong gait must have astonished what pedestrians I passed, but I did not abate my pace until I arrived breathless at Melinna Brown's address. Two cars stood at the entrance. The FBI was ahead of me.

I took the stairs two steps at a time. The door of her apartment stood open. Two neat young men turned as I entered.

"Doctor Gimp?" one of them asked.

"It is," I said. "Where is Miss Brown?"

"Not here. What's this about?"

"Miss Brown called me for help. I called your office at once."

"When we got here, Miss Brown was gone. Her door stood open. There are no signs of a struggle. Nothing has been disturbed."

"What do we do?" I demanded.

"We will take care of things here. You will go at once to our office. The special agent in charge is waiting for you. Nothing you can do here, doctor. Our man in the car outside will drive you."

They were right. There was nothing I could do here to assist. These young men were experts. I descended the stairs again, entered the car in which a driver sat, and was driven to the field office. The special agent in charge was awaiting me.

I described the brief telephone conversation, consisting as it had of a terrified call for help.

"Yes. Yes," he said. "But before that, I only have things at secondhand. Describe the visit of those gunmen. Their threat with respect to Miss Brown."

I did so, succinctly.

"There is no evidence," he said, "that they suspect you have been working with Major Van Tuyl?"

"They indicated none."

"Excellent," he said. "Their next step will be to get in touch with you. To make demands upon you, using Miss Brown as persuasion."

"One would think so," I answered.

"Then," he said, "you will give them the opportunity to do so. You will go back to your apartment and wait."

"But——" I started to protest.

"You can do nothing to aid Miss Brown. Please do as I request."

"If they contact me? Shall I report to you?"

"No," he said. "Definitely not. We must not risk arousing their suspicions. Everything now depends upon that—upon your being a bewildered and frightened scientist, nothing more. They will demand that you perform certain actions. They will make threats against Miss Brown's safety to compel you to agree. You will do so."

"I will agree to do what they demand?" I asked.

He nodded in the affirmative. "They will have made a plan. You know what it is they want. What their plan is we do not know, but somehow you are to be used to steal the electronic brain and transport it out of White Sands. In the morning you will go to White Sands as usual. Major Van Tuyl will give you further instructions."

He glanced at me keenly. "Major Van Tuyl informs me that you are aware of the risks involved and that you are willing to assume them."

"At the moment," said I, "I seem to be aware of nothing except that Miss Brown is in danger."

"She may," said the special agent in charge, "be suffering discomfort and fright, but she is in no imminent personal danger. She is too valuable alive."

"Yes," I said grimly. "But suppose I do as they demand. Suppose I abstract and deliver to them the electronic brain. How long will Miss Brown live after they have it in their hands?"

"If all goes well," he assured me, "you need have no fear."

"How can you be sure? You cannot be sure."

"Doctor Gimp," he said gravely, "we shall do our best. Much more is at stake than the life of one girl. Perhaps thousands, hundreds of thousands of lives are at stake—the very safety of the United States."

"Another lady who is expendable," I said bitterly.

"In our conception," he answered, "no one is expendable who can be saved. I assure you solemnly, Doctor Gimp, that whatever can be done by human beings to return Miss Brown safely to you shall be done."

"And with that," I said dully, "I must be content."

"We may rely upon you, doctor?"

"I'll go through with it," I answered.

THE agent stood up and extended his hand. "I'm sorry it has come to this," he said. "I'm sorry it had to come to this."

"I warned you to guard her," I said.

"Goodnight, Doctor Gimp," was all the reply he made to my accusation.

I thought I perceived the implication, and I was enraged. "Sir," I said, rising to my feet, "if I find that you have deliberately permitted this thing to happen to Miss Brown to further your plans—if harm comes to her in consequence—I shall hold you and Major Van Tuyl accountable."

"Goodnight, Doctor Gimp," he repeated, and I withdrew from his office.

It was with mingled rage and fear for Melinna's safety that I walked back to my apartment. Yet, looking at the matter from his point of view, from the point of view of one entrusted with the task of averting a calamity from our country, I was compelled to admit that he was right.

One life, a dozen lives were as nothing compared to the calamity that might fall upon us if an enemy came into possession of this secret thing. These men, Van Tuyl, the FBI, were not cruel men or ruthless men. Nor is a general who orders his men into battle a cruel or ruthless man. But that reflection made it no less harrowing to me that fate had selected Melinna Brown to be a sacrifice to the common good.

One thing was certain to me, and, I judged, also to the FBI: I would be approached by the persons who had spirited Melinna out of her apartment. Doubtless contact would be made immediately. It was for that reason that I had been directed to go back to my rooms. It was equally evident to me that all protection would be withdrawn from me to afford unimpeded opportunity.

I proceeded in the direction of my home with a deliberation that did not match my state of mind. At last I reached the vicinity of my apartment house. A driveway stretched back along its northerly side—a tunnel of blackness. As I came abreast of it, a voice, speaking a little above a whisper, addressed me.

"Doctor Gimp," it said insistently.

"Yes?" I replied.

"Step this way," said the voice.

"If you want to speak to me," said I, "come out of the darkness."

"We like the darkness," the voice said with a humorous twist.

"It is you again!" I exclaimed, recognising the voice of Mr. Ken.

"Yes, doctor. But this time we'll know better how to handle you. As Ling Po said, 'Walk wisely in the jungle with open eyes, for a trailing vine may be a venomous asp.' We did not walk wisely before. Please approach."

I obeyed, for I knew they would not be imperative without means to enforce their orders.

"Keep coming," Mr. Ken said, "but stop when I direct."

I was aware of two figures, scarcely discernible in the velvety blackness, also of a metallic object being pressed roughly against my spine.

"Stop," said Mr. Ken. "Do not be alarmed. We come to give you instructions."

"You have Miss Brown?" I asked, feeling my anger stir.

"We have Miss Brown. As added pressure was needed. We do not like you, Doctor Gimp. You humiliated Bubble Mouth and myself. We have lost face. But we must postpone personal satisfactions. That, we assure you, will come later."

"What," I asked, "do you demand?"

"To start, we will point out the alternatives to refusal. First, you will be convicted of the murder of Miss du Guesclin. Your so-called patriotism might cause you to make that sacrifice for your country. The second alternative is Miss Brown. Unpleasant things will happen to her. We Orientals have a knowledge of methods of inflicting pain."

"I do not doubt it," I said grimly.

"Then, doctor, there is a third alternative: if you are stiff-necked, your usefulness to us is ended. We have, in that case, the permission of our employer to regain our self-respect. Our reputation has been grievously damaged. Personally, we hope you will be stubborn."

An immediate surrender, a too-quick and easy surrender, might not be accepted as genuine.

"How," I asked, "can I be guaranteed of Miss Brown's safety—that she will be released unharmed if I accede to your demands?"

"My word of honor as a Chinese gentleman," said Mr. Ken.

"That is insufficient," I said stoutly.

"Miss Brown will be released intact. Miss du Guesclin will never arise to haunt you." I could sense a shrug in the darkness. "How," he asked, "can we possibly supply a guarantee? You will be compelled, doctor, to take a chance."

The metallic object in the hand of Bubble Mouth pressed more painfully

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against my back. I stood still a moment, as if hesitating.

"Your decision, doctor?" said Mr. Ken.

"It is Miss Brown," I said in a voice which I hoped expressed misery. "If it weren't for Miss Brown! I—I cannot endure the thought of pain or death for her."

"Now that is very, very reasonable," said Mr. Ken.

"Tell me what you want, Mr. Ken."

"That you can guess, Doctor Gimp. Our objective is the electronic brain."

"But how can I procure it for you?" I asked. "How can I abstract it from White Sands? How can I transport it through the gates, past the security guards? It is impossible."

"Not to you, Doctor Gimp. Not to you. You are above suspicion. It will be a matter of simplicity for you. Do you suppose, doctor, that we would go so far without a definite, shall we say foolproof, plan?"

"No plan will work," I said firmly.

"We have," said he, "a correct idea of the size of the thing we want, and of its shape. We believe it can be contained in a large suitcase. Right?"

"You are right," I answered slowly.

"So nice of you to be co-operative," said Mr. Ken. "Now here is the expedient. It is simple—beautifully simple. Not tomorrow night, but the night after, you will find some cogent reason for staying at White Sands. Naturally, you will bring with you clothing and toilet articles. You will bring them in a large suitcase—perhaps larger than necessary. But that will arouse no suspicion. You will sleep wherever it is that accommodations are provided. In the morning you will, quite naturally, bring your suitcase to the laboratory where you work and where the electronic brain is kept secure. Am I clear so far?"

"You are clear," I said.

"The rest," said Mr. Ken, "will be as easy as sliding down a pole covered with grease. You will find it necessary to work late—so that you will miss the bus to El Paso. You will borrow a motor car from the pool. In the meantime you will have been adroit enough to fit the electronic brain into your suitcase. You will put the suitcase in the car and drive yourself to El Paso."

"Possibly," I said, "it can be done."

"You will simply walk out, doctor, suitcase in hand, get into your car and drive, until willing hands deprive you of your burden. Then you will proceed to El Paso, and shortly thereafter Miss Brown will be restored to your eager arms. Can you discover a flaw?"

"None," said I.

"We are forehanded," said Mr. Ken. "Just in case you own no suitable piece of luggage, we have brought one for your use. Do you wish me to repeat these instructions?"

"It will be unnecessary," I said.

"The night after tomorrow. You will be met at a suitable place."

"And allowed to proceed to El Paso?"

"Of course. You will have served your purpose." He chuckled. "And we must not delay your reunion with Miss Brown."

He pressed the handle of a suitcase into my hand. "Goodnight, doctor, and may good fortune attend you."

With the suitcase in my hand, I proceeded onwards to the entrance to my apartment, I climbed the stairs, opened my door and turned on the light. The night that lay before me would be sleepless, and I looked forward to it with dread.

* * * * * *

To cope with the threat of a personal catastrophe is one thing; to be made responsible for the fate of another is quite different. I am reasonably certain that if it had been only my own life or freedom that was threatened, I would have been able to act with fortitude and integrity. I shall always wonder if I could have acted with equal courage had the choice been given me between betraying my country and saving the life of Melinna Brown.

If my position had actually been as Balthasar Toledo and his accessories had believed it; if I had not been argued into permitting myself to be used as a cat's-paw by Major Van Tuyl; if I had been simply a scientist working in the laboratory of White Sands, how would I have coped with the pressures that had been brought to bear upon me? I confess that I do not know.

But I did not have to make that choice. Events had assumed a form in which I could do nothing but proceed as directed. Nothing was left to my decision, and I could only hope that Major Van Tuyl and the FBI, with which he was associated, knew what they were about and would be successful in carrying out their counterplot.

IMMEDIATELY upon my arrival in White Sands on the next morning I informed Major Van Tuyl of the events of the night before and of the directions given me by Mr. Ken.

"Tomorrow," he said, "you are to arrive equipped with a suitcase. You are to substitute the electronic brain—which we have prepared—for your clothing and drive with it along the road to El Paso."

"That is correct."

"Somewhere along the way you will be stopped and relieved of your baggage and allowed to proceed on your way."

"So they told me."

"Did you believe it?"

"No," I said. "I am not so fatuous as to believe that. They will not turn me loose until they have made certain that I have brought them the brain."

He nodded.

"Our plans," he said, "are based on that theory. We are certain they will take you and the brain to that hideout in the Organ Mountains. For what other purpose would they have set up that advance post? You and the brain will disappear. What safer place to hide you than up at that prospect hole? Give them a safe spot—and time—to examine the contraption to see if it is the real thing. Then, at their leisure, they can transport it across the border."

"A point of personal interest to me," I said uncomfortably, "is what becomes of me when they're satisfied I've performed my mission. They're not," said I, using a favorite word of my mother's, "persnickety about taking human life. They've killed the Mexican Iturbe on the train; they have murdered the two prospectors; they have eliminated Renee du Gueslin. I will have served my purpose. I will be only an encumbrance."

"You," Van Tuyl assured me, "are included in the precautions we have taken."

"I hope they will be effective," I said and he grinned wryly. "I think," I said after a pause, "that I should like to write a couple of letters—in case. One to mother and one to Miss Melinna Brown."

"Naturally," he said. "I'll see they are delivered. In case."

I fear I was of very little use to Doctor Newcomb or the laboratory that day. To concentrate on matters scientific was beyond my powers, and the minutes dragged. That night my sleep was fitful. In the morning I carried the empty suitcase to the laboratory.

Van Tuyl came over and together we fitted the counterfeit brain into it. Its dimensions were somewhat smaller than the interior of the bag, so we packed it carefully with newspapers. It was, of course, heavier than my clothing, but not so heavy that I could not carry it comfortably.

I continued to follow directions, delaying my departure until the bus was gone. A car was brought over from the pool and parked in front of headquarters. Van Tuyl was there to see me off. Rather to my surprise, he laid aside his gruff mannerisms. He seemed almost solicitous. After we had placed the suitcase in the rear seat of the automobile, he went so far as to extend his hand.

"Well, so long, doc," he said. "I hope it falls butter side up."

I handed him the two letters I had written, and he nodded. "I'll return them to you tomorrow," he said.

"Right," I answered.

He shook hands again and scowled. "I've met worse guys than you, doc," he said. "Be on your way."

I drove out of the circle and headed southward for El Paso. Though I did not turn to look, I knew that he was standing there peering after me.

I drove out on the road that passed the swimming-pool and the launching sites and the building that housed miracles of electronics. I glanced sidewise at the radar saucers upon its roof and wished that they or some of the marvellous devices on the floor below could be able to keep track of my progress as they did of the progress and behaviour of missiles launched from the sites at my left. But no instrument had been devised that could give that service. I was on my own.

My badge carried me past all security guards and barriers. Over at my right loomed the fastnesses of the Organ Mountains. I did not drive to U.S. Route Fifty-four, but took the desert road, which cut off several miles of distance. Presently I would cross the southern line of New Mexico into Texas.

I passed no cars. The desert stretching about me was deserted and dusk commenced to descend upon the loneliness. I drove slowly, expecting now to be accosted and stopped.

As I skirted a low sand hill a man stepped into the road and held up his hand. It was the Chinese, Mr. Ken. He was courteous and said, "Good evening," as if it were a chance encounter. I made no response.

"Have you the gadget?" he inquired.

"On the back seat," I said.

"Any difficulties?"

"None," I replied.

He turned, waved his hand, and Bubble Mouth appeared, driving a car from its place of concealment over the hard floor of the desert. He stood, mute and dour. I saw no firearms, but imagined them to be present in places of accessible concealment. The two men lifted the suitcase from my car, transferring it to their own.

"I've performed my part," I said.

"Well—nearly, doctor."

"I was to be allowed to proceed to El Paso," I said.

"You didn't get it in writing," said Mr. Ken. "We can't bear to part with you so soon."

I protested as a matter of form, but they compelled me to alight and take a seat beside Mr. Ken, who was driving their car. Bubble Mouth guided my car off the road and behind the dune, where it could not be seen. They were very matter of fact about it all. Bubble Mouth returned and climbed into the rear seat.

It was my expectation that they would take one of the desert roads, which were little more than tracks, towards the Organs. That was what Van Tuyl and I had been certain they would do. But, to my surprise and con-

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sternation, they proceeded onwards for a time and then, instead of turning to the right, they veered on to a track that led towards Alamogordo. I knew instantly that something had gone wrong with Van Tuyl's planning — dreadfully wrong. We were not driving towards the Organ Mountains and the mine of the two prospectors, but in exactly an opposite direction. All counter-plans had been predicated upon the Organ Mountains. We had been tragically in error.

Boldly they crossed the pavement of Route Fifty-four.

"If," said Mr. Ken, "anybody meddles with us, be ready with your badge and conversation."

But no one meddled with us. We crossed the railroad and, as darkness fell, were close to the eastern wall of mountains.

"You'll be interested," Mr. Ken said, "to know that we are entering the great State of Texas."

I was not interested; I was thoroughly alarmed.

"Where," I asked, "are we going?"

"Nice place. With a view of the river. Not much of a river, we admit, but it's the best we have. You'll be able to look over into Mexico."

There was rough going and discomfort, but the car proceeded without mishap. Although it was growing dark, the driver turned on no headlights. He seemed to drive by instinct. At last, after what seemed hours of jolting and slewing, we approached a mass blacker than the darkness of the night. We passed through a gate in a wire fence and the mass of blackness disclosed itself to be an adobe house of some dimensions.

"No place like home," said Mr. Ken. "Down with you, doctor, and prepare to be received in due form."

At the sounds of our arrival, a door opened and closed again and a man walked towards us. We had arrived not at a mine in the Organ Mountains about which Major Van Tuyl would have thrown a cordon of men, but at a house many miles away from that spot about which no cordon could have been thrown, because Major Van Tuyl was unaware of its existence. In that moment I gave up hope.

The man who emerged from the house approached the car.

"Well?" he demanded. I recognised the voice of Balthasar Toledo.

"A most successful enterprise," said Mr. Ken. "Our amiable friend, Doctor Gimp, consented to accompany us."

"Where is it?" Toledo asked impatiently.

"Resting innocently on the back seat," Mr. Ken responded. "The excellent Bubble Mouth will lift it out."

The dumb man got down, opened the door of the car, and lifted out the suitcase containing the bogus electronic brain. Toledo seized it avidly. He spoke to me.

"For your sake, Doctor Gimp," he said, "I hope this is what we want. I trust you have not been so unwise as to offer a substitute. Come in the house."

It would have been useless to protest or to resist. No sooner was I standing on the ground than Toledo struck me viciously with his fist, knocking me against the side of the car. "Just the first payment on a debt!" he snarled.

"And when," asked Mr. Ken, "is the privilege to be granted to me to restore my own honor?"

"Business first," Toledo said, and pushed me towards the black bulk of the house.

I entered a large square room, its ceiling supported by unhewn logs. The illumination was kerosene lamps. A fire burned cheerfully in a huge fireplace, but it did not cheer me. As we stepped into a room a man arose from a chair by the fire, and I recognised the guttural person whom Melinna and I had seen in the box canyon in the Organs with Toledo.

"That iss id?" he asked eagerly. "Let me see. Let me examine." He shook his round head uneasily. "I cannot believe yet. In the end, after all the so hard work and planning, it was so easy!"

He bent over the suitcase avidly. A suppressed excitement settled upon the room. He lifted the aluminium container and raised its lid. Inside was disclosed a mass of complicated wires, dials, electronic devices, over which the Slav bent with narrowed eyes.

"Id iss delicate. Id iss complex. Yess, yess. Complex. I belief this iss id. I believe we have id in our hands. But iss too delicate, too much science for me." He raised his head and stared at me venomously. "I cannot be sure. I must wait for him to come. He will know—he, our greatest man in this thing of electronics. Only he can make the guarantee id iss genuine."

He stood erect and peered from man to man. "If this iss id," he said, and his stature seemed to increase, "we deserve well of our country."

"I trust," Toledo said grimly, "we do more than deserve. I trust there will be prompt payment."

"Of that you shall have no doubt," said the guttural man.

"In America," said Mr. Ken, "there is a saying. It is a cogent saying. Not liarid but to the point. Cash on delivery. Now I, Worthington Ken, am a convinced and practising and loyal Communist. But I do as other Communists do, even the highest. I spare a thought for my own advantage. So I repeat, cash on delivery. Also, no cash in hand, no delivery."

The guttural man threw back his shoulders and his eyes glittered with the fire of fanaticism. "The bargain was made," he said sternly. "It will be out-carried. Do you dare to question?"

"I am not a timid man," Toledo said crisply. "You are still on American soil, Otto. These are my men. Don't throw your Soviet weight around. The deal was to be C.O.D."

"Understood," Otto said, still arrogant. "Payment awaits the coming of him. He will examine. He will pay." He looked about him scornfully. "I do not accomplish this thing for money. Now we conquer the world. Now we smash the democracies of blood-sucking plutocrats. Now comes the war—the people's war. We conquer the world."

MR. KEN watched placidly, his Chinese features expressionless. Bubble Mouth stood stolid, a menacing figure.

"What says Ling Po?" asked Mr. Ken. "'The hungry man is a sword without a blade.' We have not eaten."

"Manuel!" shouted Toledo, and a Mexican came into the room from what was doubtless the kitchen.

Toledo spoke imperatively in Spanish, which I did not understand. The Mexican vanished, to return presently with eating utensils, which he placed upon the long, wooden table. He disappeared, to return again with a great pot of beans and a bowl of chilli and a pot of coffee.

Mr. Ken turned to me with geniality. "Our house is yours, and all within it. I have longed to see the sight of a condemned man eating a hearty meal."

"The implication," said I steadily, "does not improve my appetite."

"The brave man, says Ling Po, faces death as if it were but a pleasant journey," Mr. Ken said.

Toledo was abrupt. "When," he demanded, "does your scientific nabob arrive? I want to get this thing out of my hands, across the border, tonight. I want to be a long way from here before morning—a long way into the interior of Mexico."

"He should be here now," said Otto.

We sat at the table. "I hope the chilli will not be too hot for you, doctor," Toledo said ironically.

Bubble Mouth ate voraciously; Mr. Ken ate daintily. There was a light in the latter's black eyes which in an Occidental would have been the light of mischief. He seemed to take a sort of elfin satisfaction in suggesting an unpleasant possibility.

"Now that the cup is near the lip, honored employer," he said to Toledo, "I would ask if the name of William George Thomas has given you uneasiness."

"Curse William George Thomas," Toledo said with sudden rage.

"Remember," said Mr. Ken softly, "what he did to you in Budapest. When, also, the cup was near the lips. Remember Harbin. Let your mind recall Cairo. Me, I never forget that William George Thomas is in El Paso."

Otto's guttural voice spoke gratingly. "I gave the order that this fat man be kill," he said, glaring at Toledo. "Him I fear more than all the FBI. That man so fat he almost cannot move, but with the subtile brain."

"This fat man," said Mr. Ken admiringly, "he can move when movement is necessary. I think he could run a hurdle race if circumstances required."

Uneasy silence fell upon the room. The Mexican came in to clear away the dishes. He passed close to Toledo, who kicked at him viciously, as if he must have some outlet for the vile temper he was in. Manuel avoided the kick in a lazy, placid way, as if such unpleasant gestures were an expected part of his day's work. He gathered up the plates and knives and forks, and slouched back into the kitchen.

"You two," said Toledo, surrendering again to poisonous temper, "haven't covered yourselves with glory. You, Ken, and Bubble Mouth have left the fat man alive to worry us." He tapped himself on the chest. "When I have a job to do, I do it. Where would we have been if I hadn't taken care of that Mexican Secret Service man on the train?"

The serving man had reached the kitchen door. He paused an instant and disappeared.

"Is it time to boast?" asked Mr. Ken. "What you did was neat. But were not Bubble Mouth and myself competent in the affair of Renee du Gueslin?"

"Anyone can kill a woman," snarled Toledo.

"Not with such embellishments," protested Mr. Ken. "Not with adroitness that put Doctor Gimp so securely in our hands. Nor were we incompetent when we gave Miss Brown a pressing invitation to be our guest."

I was appalled. Here we sat in one room, five of us; I a prisoner, but with ears to hear. In my presence they spoke openly of their crimes, as if it were of no consequence that I should be a witness.

The implication was plain. It was not their intention that I ever should be able to testify.

"It was your promise to me," I said, "that if I abstracted the electronic brain Miss Brown would be set at liberty, unharmed. Where is Miss Brown? Do you mean to live up to that part of your agreement?"

"I fear," said Mr. Ken, "you failed also to have that clause reduced to writing." He shrugged and glanced sidewise at Balthasar Toledo. "Our friend is annoyed with Miss Brown. She rejected his blandishments. I fear

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he will insist upon completing unfinished business with the lady."

"I suppose it would be futile," said I, "to point out that she cannot harm you. That she has no knowledge that can harm you."

"Quite futile to point out," said Mr Ken. "But I fancy Miss Brown has wherewith to extricate herself. Mr. Toledo will be in funds. He will be opulent and need not economise. Let us say that if Miss Brown were complaisant—if she should consent to become Toledo's travelling companion—to save herself from death by accepting, as the sentimental novelists express it, a fate worse than death?"

I knew his intention was to torture me with a device more harrowing than the Chinese Death of a Thousand Deaths. I felt blind rage surge up within me again, the lust to kill. But I was helpless. I ground my teeth.

"Perhaps," said Mr. Ken in his modulated voice, "you would like to see Miss Brown."

He walked to the door at the right of the kitchen door and pulled it open. "Come out, Miss Brown. It is visiting hours. A friend has come to see you."

Melinna stepped into the room, followed closely by a large woman of Indian extraction with beady eyes, dusky skin and high cheekbones. Melinna stood staring at me, wide-eyed, pale but resolute. When she spoke, I was aghast, for it seemed to me that her words, if not her manner, indicated that the treatment she had received, the terror she must have endured, had caused her mind to become unstable.

"Ah, Doctor Gimp!" she said. "In servomechanisms," she said, as if delivering a lecture, "there is a signal applied to the control circuit that indicates any misalignment between the controlled and controlling members. This is known as an error signal. Can you tell me, doctor, if such a signal can, in science, be designated as female?"

She paused an instant, and then went on gravely. "An oscillograph would be so very, very useful, doctor. You haven't one in your baggage, by any chance?"

"Melinna!" I exclaimed. "Melinna!"

Before I could say more, before she could utter more electronic jargon, the Indian woman seized her by the shoulders and thrust her back into the room in which she had been confined.

"What," demanded Toledo, "was all that about?"

"The lady," said Mr. Ken, "would appear to have burst her mental buttons."

That was my first unhappy impression. But her eyes had been steady and clear and sane. Was it possible, I asked myself, that by using verbiage incomprehensible to our captors, she had sought to convey some message to me? If so, what could it be? An error signal. Could an error signal be female? A signal indicating misalignment between controlling and controlled members.

Was there some misalignment between the human members of this group? Was she herself, being female, an error signal? And an oscillograph! An oscillograph is an instrument for making a record of rapidly varying electric quantity. She had said that I would find one useful. There would be, if my assumption was right and she was conveying a message, some rapid change in circumstances which I should note and of which I might take advantage.

For the first time I felt the faint stirrings of hope. I was certain that Melinna intended to give me hope. But then I remembered the imminent arrival of the awaited Soviet electronic scientist who would be able to examine the bogus electronic brain and pronounce upon its genuineness.

Such slender hope as had blossomed withered and died.

For a man of this expert's attainments, only a short time would be required for him to detect the bogus character of the electronic brain which I had delivered to these people. Their reaction would be swift and savage.

I have often wondered what thoughts passed through the mind of a condemned man in the interval of waiting to be led to the place of execution. Now I was in a position to state that his thoughts were not pleasant. It is difficult for a man to realise that his hours are numbered. It was difficult for me to accept that fact.

I SUPPOSE that hope is the one indestructible emotion of man, otherwise he could not continue to exist. We are aware of tragedies on every hand, but we are confident that calamity is a thing that happens to others, never to ourselves. Even now, a prisoner in this room, surrounded by men to whom human life meant nothing, I could not bring myself to accept my fate. I would continue to hope that something would intervene before it was too late.

My thoughts turned to Melinna Brown and I was tortured by the realisation that, but for me, she would not be imprisoned in the adjoining room. I was conscious of a desire to see her, to speak with her, to express to her my grief that it was I who was to blame for her situation. And there was something else I wished to say to her, a disclosure I desired to make. It was unendurable to pass out of life without saying certain words to her.

That desire became so strong that I resolved to ask for the granting of this favor. I turned to Toledo.

"Mr. Toledo," I said. "I wish to speak to Miss Brown."

"No," he answered.

"It can do you no harm," I said. "To you it will be a very slight thing."

Mr. Ken smilingly intervened.

"Listen to the wisdom of Ling Po," he said. "'He who grants a boon to an enemy gains merit. The man who sows a handful of rice in the soil of his foe may eat of the harvest in the day of his own starvation.' Even we Chinese, Mr. Toledo, could devise no more subtle torture than to grant a final interview between condemned lovers."

Toledo frowned, then shrugged. He motioned toward the door behind which Melinna was imprisoned.

I accepted this as permission. No one interfered with me as I walked across the room and opened the door. Melinna was sitting before a smaller fireplace, warming herself at its blazing logs. The Indian woman crouched on the floor.

"They have let me see you, Melinna," I said.

She turned her head and was able to smile. "We are in a pretty mess," she said.

"It is my fault," I said. "I'm to blame. I want you to know how bitterly I accuse myself."

"Don't be silly," she said tartly. That certainly was not the lofty language of high tragedy. It was down to earth. She grinned in that impish manner that was hers. "You didn't invent sin," she said.

"Did you," I asked, "convey some message to me?"

She put her finger to her lips. "You understand plain English, don't you?" She made a move. "So," she said, narrowing her eyes, "does this chaperon of mine." It was a warning.

"I," said I, "had a special reason for asking permission to see you. It is possible, indeed probable, that I shall not survive this night. There was a thing I did not wish to leave unsaid."

"In those circumstances," she answered, "I probably should listen."

"Aren't you afraid?" I asked.

"Of what you're going to say, or of things in general?"

"Of the situation in which we find ourselves," I said gravely.

"I'm scared out of my wits," she answered. "Do you want me to throw a wing-ding?"

"It is not a time for flippancy," I reproved.

"Flippancy," she retorted, "is as apt to the occasion as pedantry. Me, I'd rather pass out with a quip on my lips than demonstrating my higher education. Do you have to talk like a textbook? If, just once, you would use a short, ordinary, commonplace word instead of reciting in multisyllables, you would get favorable mention by the committee."

She waggled her head disparagingly. "All right, doctor, proceed with your oration."

"You make it difficult," I told her. And then proceeded. "There was," said I, "a long interruption in our acquaintanceship—from childhood to maturity. As a little girl you exerted a profound influence upon me and caused a definite modification in my life. Unexpectedly, we made contact again, and though you have irritated me and confused me, I find that you still are potent to influence me and to modify me. I may say that I have been disconcerted to discover the place of importance you have usurped in my life, and that, without volition on my part—indeed against my firm resolution—I have become obsessed by affectionate regard for you. To the point, Melinna, where you have become paramount in my thoughts to the extent that a future in which I would be disassociated from you is definitely appalling. It was to tell you this that I begged for permission to speak with you tonight."

She stared at me. Her lips parted. It might almost be said that she gawped at me in astonishment.

"Well," she said breathlessly, "I'll be dashed!"

"I have made my meaning clear," I said.

"That," she answered, "is what you think!" Suddenly she was angry. "Listen, you big, hopeless pedant! Any girl with the normal equipment of arms and legs—and mine are very nice legs—looks forward to the time when some man shall tell her she is the apple of his eye. It's a glorious, whopping heart-busting moment, and it should be done with trimmings."

"Indeed?" said I.

"And what do I get? Do you get all churned up with emotion and blurt? A girl can like that. Do you just forget about words and grab? That's a dandy method. Do you get all fussed and have to have it pried out of you? Which could be fun. No, you mount the platform, lay out your notes on the reading desk and declaim a tiresome valedictory oration. When I sort it out I get the vague and unemotional idea that you are proposing to me. You inundate me with a spate of two-dollar words when an illiterate truck driver with a suit up could say it better in three one-syllable words. You've turned a big moment into a calamity!" She was flushed and furious.

"What three one-syllable words?" I asked helplessly.

"You'll never know!" she snapped.

Would I never know? I regarded her

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with something like despair. I had endeavored honestly to express to her my sentiments; to declare to her, in fitting terms, how precious she was to me. To my consternation, she showed in return nothing but resentment. I had indeed proved inadequate to a crucial situation.

I found myself angry—angry at her and at myself. I was shaken by emotion to the point of unstudied action and incoherence.

I strode toward her, seized her by the shoulders and shook her roughly, glaring down into her astonished eyes. Speech seemed to be wrenched from me.

"Confound you, you little snip!" I said furiously, "I love you!"

"By golly!" she exclaimed, and her face flushed and her eyes glowed. "You've got the makings, after all!"

Her lovely hands reached for me. I found myself lifting her in my arms and crushing her lips to mine. It was an exhilarating experience.

"Sweetheart!" I mumbled. "Sweetheart!"

She released herself and stood breathing in gasps. She was radiant, beautiful, desirable. She pushed me away.

"You did fine!" she said. "I'll make something of you, darling! My dumb darling! Now scram out of here. Love isn't the next order of business."

I strode out of the room in a mood of exultation. I closed the door after myself and became aware of Toledo, of Mr. Ken's Oriental face, of the brutish face of Bubble Mouth, and of the Eastern European, Otto. The Mexican cook was standing in the kitchen doorway.

"Lipstick," said Mr. Ken, "was unknown to Ling Po or he would have made a wise saying about it."

Before any other man could speak or move to deride or to threaten, a roughly clad man I never had seen before burst into the room.

"A car's coming," he said. "From El Paso way."

"Get back outside," Toledo said imperatively. "Station the men."

The man slammed the door after him.

"Could it be he?" Mr. Ken asked.

"Not from El Paso. He comes across the river. Horseback."

"This," said Ken softly, "I do not like."

We listened. There was no shot. A motor-car drove into the yard and stopped before the door. Toledo, pistol in hand, snatched the door open and stood on the tiny porch. Bubble Mouth and Mr. Ken, also displaying arms, stood beside him. I straightened to look over their shoulders at the automobile.

Its rear door opened and an enormous, elephantine figure emerged with glacierlike slowness. The four men on the porch stood as though frozen.

"Good evening, gentlemen all," said the musical voice of William George Thomas. "The time seemed clement for me to intervene to cast a stone into the pond with attendant ripples. Replace your weapons, gentlemen; there is subject matter for us to debate."

With the ponderous movements of a pachyderm, William George Thomas crossed the intervening space and mounted the step. Placidly he shouldered aside the men who stood there, entered the room in which I stood, calmly selected a chair and lowered his weight into it.

"Good evening, doctor, good evening," he said to me. Then to Toledo, "Surely, my old friend," he said, "you aren't surprised to see me, now that matters approach their climax. Surely you're not surprised."

No one moved. No one spoke. The fat man gazed blandly about him, unmoved as if he sat in the safety of his own apartment.

"Will someone," he asked politely, "offer me a cigarette?"

William George Thomas expressed nothing but benignity as he settled himself comfortably in the creaking chair. His small eyes beamed over dumpling cheeks as he puffed contentedly at his cigarette.

His was the manner of a man sure of a warm welcome, and his aplomb served well to arouse the apprehension of Toledo and of the very intelligent Mr. Ken. Here was something they could not appraise.

He had come alone. Nonchalantly he had waddled into the lion's den. He radiated confidence—the confidence of a man who held a known advantage. I, a spectator, was aware of the uneasiness of my captors; I could almost read their minds.

William George Thomas, with what seemed like incredible recklessness, had come to this spot alone; had placed himself in the hands of men who he knew well had sought to take his life. I could see that they were shaken.

It was incredible to them that the fat man should have ventured as he had ventured unless he had the whip hand. They were thrown off balance. William George Thomas was relishing the situation.

"Doctor Gimp," he said suavely, "you seem to be in a predicament."

"I am, indeed," I said.

"I assume," he said, "that the delectable Miss Brown shares your uncomfortable dilemma?"

"She also is here," I told him.

"I trust," he said, letting his eyes move from face to face, "that she has been treated as befits a charming lady, and that you yourself have suffered no ill usage."

"Miss Brown," I answered, "has not been molested. As for me, with the exception of one unwarranted blow by Mr. Toledo, I have taken no harm."

He nodded. "We will consider the unwarranted blow later," he said. He pointed to the open suitcase and the counterfeit electronic brain.

"That contraption," he said, "I assume is the objective of all the gyrations and manoeuvrings. One would scarcely credit that so much lethal potentiality could be compressed in so constricted an area. Who," he asked with a suave smile, "could conceive that world dominance could be stored in so small a package?"

"If I lifted a finger," Toledo said in a grating voice, "Bubble Mouth would shoot you where you sit."

MR. THOMAS smiled faintly. "You will not lift that finger," he said evenly.

"What will stop me?" Toledo asked.

"Your uncertainty," explained Mr. Thomas, "as to what the consequences would be. I am a devious man, Balthasar, as your previous exeprience of me has taught you. I vanish and I appear. It may seem that I do this or omit that without rhyme or reason. But you have unhappy knowledge that I neither act nor refrain from acting without a purpose."

He made a deprecating gesture. "My superiority to you, Balthasar, lies in the realm of higher intelligence. I am a vain man, but my vanity is soundly based."

"Stop gabbling and talk business," Balthasar Toledo said.

Mr. Ken smiled blandly. "We Orientals," he said, "also have devious intelligence."

"I admire you, Mr. Ken," William George Thomas said, with a gracious nod. "But you are hampered by Balthasar's ineptness."

"Have you considered that I am a fatalist, sir?" Mr. Ken asked. "True, Mr. Toledo might be deterred by thoughts of the consequences of shooting you. I would not. In this matter I have lost face. Which is unendurable to one of my lineage. If I thought face would be restored by shooting you I would not hesitate."

"Still," said Mr. Thomas, "you will not shoot. There are other considerations than fatalism and face." He smiled widely. "There is cash."

"You came to talk about cash?" demanded Toledo.

"In part. My tastes are expensive and my expenses high."

"You want to bargain?"

"With some extra exertion I could take all," Mr. Thomas said. "But I will dicker. There are times when it is wise to take half a loaf—if the loaf is big enough." He indicated the aluminium container.

"You have a thing there. It is ready for delivery to your employers. But there is a question. Will your employers pay you your fee for a pig in a poke? I am almost omniscient, but I do not know if what you have is the electronic brain or a useless mass of wires and dials and other plausible gadgets."

"It is genuine," said Otto harshly.

"You are not competent to pass upon that," the fat man said with no lack of courtesy. "Your Kremlin employers will not purchase save on the opinion of the highest scientific authority."

"Who," said Toledo, "is due to arrive at any moment."

"It will be dangerous for him to cross the border. He and his superiors will be resentful if he takes that risk for a counterfiet. My experience with Communist gentlemen is that they express their resentment vigorously. They liquidate."

"Do you think it is bogus?" demanded Toledo.

Thomas waggled his huge head. "If I knew that I would have saved myself this journey. I do not know. I am compelled to act as if the thing were genuine. But, gentlemen, I have taken into reckoning an imponderable factor which has escaped you."

"What factor?" demanded Toledo.

"I am a rare judge of human beings," said William George Thomas with a manner almost fatuous.

"What has that to do with it?" Toledo demanded.

"Doctor Gimp," said he, "has impressed me favorably. I am not prejudiced in his favor because he saved my life. My opinion is due to observation."

"You're talking in circles," said Toledo.

"I am talking in a straight line. You have based your entire plot upon the assumption that all men can be bought. By cash, by favor, by self-preservation. A very wide experience has taught me that this assumption is not true. It is very bad for our business, we who live in the half-world and whose standards are those of amorality. It is a stumbling block in our path that there do exist men of integrity who cannot be swayed by any pressure imposed by man."

"Put it in clear words," said Toledo.

"Why, gentlemen, I pay Doctor Gimp the high compliment of believing that his integrity is without flaw. There's your imponderable."

"You think he has tricked us?"

"I think it probable that he has bamboozled you."

"Absurd," Toledo said. "He would know that would mean his death. He knows it would mean the death of this girl in the other room. He would

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be deliberately walking into a bullet. No man would do that."

"Since the dawn of history," the fat man said, "a great many men have sacrificed their lives deliberately for a smaller thing than is involved here. And the lives of those dear to them. It is a thing to reckon with. It is a thing, I fear, that men of your persuasion fail to consider. I preach no sermons. I make no prophecies, but if your ideology, the ideology of Communism, crashes in ruin, it will not be guns that cause it, nor guided missiles. Not armies nor navies. The weapon against which you will not be able to prevail is a basic integrity among mankind more widespread than you know, which will not yield to cajolery, to temptation or to force."

He paused, and then added gravely. "Sometimes I have wished I myself were a man of integrity."

Mr. Ken sneered. "In your Western mythology is a fallen angel named Lucifer. He never is depicted as fat to grossness."

Mr. Thomas nodded, and somehow that ordinary gesture frightened me. There was that in it which was notable and grim.

"Until this moment, Mr. Ken," he said, "I have felt no personal enmity toward you."

Toledo swore. "Stop the stupid orations and come to the point! What have you got to trade?"

It was a state of reluctant truce on the part of my captors. They were armed and had retainers outside. If William George Thomas carried a weapon, it was not in evidence. Whether his presence was an advantage or a disadvantage to me, I could not guess, but, for some illogical reason, I was hopeful.

To Balthasar Toledo's question, he replied, "I shall suggest no proposal until the arrival of your scientist. When he pronounces upon the authenticity of that object, I will suggest a treaty. And state what my side of the bargain will be." He smiled about him. "Is there nothing to drink?" he asked.

Toledo shouted for Manuel, who appeared from the kitchen.

"Whisky, ice, and water," Toledo ordered. The Mexican set forth bottle glasses, a bowl of ice, and a pitcher of water.

"Eat, drink, and be merry," quoted Mr. Ken suggestively.

"It is not I who shall die," said Mr. Thomas.

There was such tension in that room as I had never experienced. Yet William George Thomas did not seem to share it.

The uncouth Bubble Mouth stood against the wall, uttering from time to time impatient, animal sounds. His posture was the crouch of a gunman, and his right hand did not leave the holstered pistol on his hip. Whatever suavity Toledo had possessed was no longer visible. Otto sat as if bewildered, and Mr Ken prowled up and down, as graceful and menacing as a hungry cat.

Manuel, when his service was completed, did not return to the kitchen, but leaned against the frame of the door indolently, his eyes half closed, as if he slept standing up. It was a strained atmosphere which could not long exist without explosion.

Again the door was opened and the same man who had announced the coming of William George Thomas thrust his head into the room.

"Horses," he said succinctly. "From the direction of the river."

"Let them come on. Keep them covered in case," Toledo said, and sighed with relief. "It will be our man."

Presently we could hear the fall of hoofs, then voices, and the sound of feet mounting to the porch. The first to enter was a tall, wiry man of some sixty years, dressed in riding boots and breeches and coat as if for a canter in Central Park. His forehead was lofty, his eyes a brilliant grey, his nose straight and patrician. He paused to accustom his eyes to the light.

"I," he announced formally, "am the Herr Doktor Rudolf Von Steen."

A German, not a Russian! I should not have been surprised, for Russia had commandeered some of the best of Germany's scientific brains to work in its laboratories. The name was not familiar to me.

"You are late," said Toledo.

"There were difficulties," said the Herr Doktor, speaking without accent. "You have been successful?"

"There it is," Toledo said, pointing.

VON STEEN'S eyes glowed. His expression was, it seemed to me, more that of a scientist avid to study the results of some epoch-making experiment than that of a political fanatic hoping to possess a fabulous weapon of war.

"Place it on the table," he commanded arrogantly. "Fetch more light. Stand back that I may examine."

"A few preliminaries first," said Toledo dryly.

"What are these preliminaries?"

"Payment for services rendered," said Toledo.

"Do you expect payment before a thorough examination?" Von Steen said scornfully. "You are not dealing with fools."

"But you have it with you."

"Again I say you are not dealing with fools. The money is at hand, convenient, well guarded."

My moment was upon me. How long the bogus electronic brain could deceive the intelligent, informed eyes of Doctor Von Steen I could not guess. It had been well constructed, with art and skill. Perhaps he would not be able to detect the deception for five minutes, a quarter of an hour, an hour.

But of one thing I was certain. When he arose to his full height from his examination and announced that here was nothing but a jumble of electronic instruments and devices, that would be my last moment. There would be a moment of blind rage, and I would cease to exist. Or, if my end did not come instantly, I could only expect a slower, more hideous vengeance for my deception.

William George Thomas was not watching Doctor Von Steen; he was peering at me appraisingly, expectantly. I clenched my fists and braced myself against the denouement.

Von Steen put on his spectacles. He moved lamps closer. He stood for long minutes peering into the entrails of the aluminum case. His face was expressionless. Long slender fingers explored. He was deliberate. He turned away from the brain and peered at me.

"You," he said, "are an American electronic scientist?"

"Yes," said I.

"You have been associated with this —this production?"

"I have," said I.

"It was a rare privilege," he said, and his voice sounded sincere.

He returned to his peering and groping. The silence in the room was heavy. To me, the interval of waiting was unbearable; it was unbearable also to Toledo.

"What's the verdict? What's the verdict?" he demanded.

"Patience! Patience!" Von Steen said tartly.

He lifted out such portions as were movable, examining them one by one, nodding and muttering under his breath. He stood erect again as if to rest his back, and addressed me, not as an enemy, but as a fellow scientist.

"When your American brains learned to split the atom, to set up chain reaction, to wrest from nature one of its ultimate secrets, you did a surpassing thing. You accomplished what, I sometimes think, man was not meant to accomplish. Now you have done another thing; you have created a mechanical, an electronic intelligence. You have endowed base metals with the quality of reason. Or close to it. Herr Doktor, it may be you have ventured too far."

"You also," said I, "have striven to penetrate those secrets."

"And I am afraid," he said solemnly.

Von Steen returned to his scrutiny. The waiting for him to state his findings was torture. I had to fight myself to prevent myself from throwing up my arms and shouting, "Put an end to this! It's a fake! It's a fake!"

At last he sighed; he removed his spectacles; he turned to Balthasar Toledo. I stood tense. My waiting was at an end. Doctor Von Steen smiled thinly at me.

"Mr. Toledo," he said, "I will stake my professional reputation—which is not inconsiderable—that this mechanism is authentic. It is the electronic brain."

I heard a gasp. It had issued from my own lips. It was incredible, beyond the bounds of possibility, but it had happened. This toy constructed to deceive had succeeded in its object. Doctor Von Steen pronounced it genuine.

My knees trembled and I pressed against the wall for support. It was a shock—an incredible shock. With my own ears I had heard this great scientist pronounce the bogus to be genuine. Either our electricians who had made the counterfeit brain were incredibly skilful or the scientific attainments of Moscow were puerile.

William George Thomas stirred in his chair so that it protested audibly. His little eyes had become big and round. It was at me that he stared, not at the incompetent scientist Von Steen. His blubber cheeks quivered like gelatine. He, it seemed, had suffered a shock equal to mine. In an instant he mastered himself; his face was bland. He even smiled faintly.

"That, Doctor Gimp," he said, "leaves us in the stratosphere without a guidance-control system. The watchword is now sauve qui peut."

Sauve qui peut—the final command of despair. Everybody for himself. Save yourself if you can.

I recall, as if it were painted indelibly upon the retinas of my eyes, the appearance of that room and the exact position of all who were present.

William George Thomas sat between the doors of the kitchen and the bedroom in which Melinna Brown was imprisoned. Doctor Von Steen stood at the table. Mr. Ken and Bubble Mouth stood shoulder to shoulder at the left of the fireplace. Otto occupied a position between table and outer door. The Mexican, Manuel, lounged in the kitchen door, and my back was against the westerly wall, facing Mr. Thomas. Balthasar Toledo confronted Von Steen, separated from him only by the width of the table.

"We have id," Otto said, suddenly exultant. "We have id. Great credit vill come to me."

"They'll make you a commissar," sneered Toledo. He swung toward the fat man. "Now," he said, "we know where we're at. What's your proposition?"

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"Do we know where we are?" Mr. Thomas countered. "Do we, indeed? First, I would inquire how trustworthy is the opinion of Doctor Von Steen."

"He would not have been sent," said Toledo, "if he were not competent."

"Oh, yes, certainly." He perked his head on one side in an irritating manner. "Might I ask, Balthasar, how long and intimate has been your acquaintance with Doctor Von Steen? Old boyhood friends, perhaps?"

Toledo was impatient. "You know well that agents in the top brackets are not permitted to know each other."

"So I have been informed. Then the fact is you never have seen Doctor Von Steen before?"

"I do not need to have seen him before. He is Doctor Von Steen."

"Who," said the fat man slyly, "presented no credentials."

"There was no need," Von Steen said harshly. "The name is identification. The name is what you call the password."

Even I, not gifted in intrigue, could see the purpose of William George Thomas. It was to create a diversion—to gain time—to collect his forces, which had been shattered by Von Steen's pronouncement.

"There is a better means of identification," Mr. Thomas purred. "An identification by knowledge. A test to be passed as to qualification." He spread his fat fingers. "Now, we have here a known scientist, a man accepted as eminent in electronics. None other than Doctor Gimp. I propose that he drop a plumb line into the depths of Doctor Von Steen's erudition. As for myself, I am not satisfied."

Mr. Ken interjected himself, smiling a sly, Oriental smile. "Mr. Thomas is a wise man. For myself, I think Mr. Thomas should be satisfied. I should like more cogent proof myself than a name, even a secret name. What says the great Ling Po? 'The mocking bird can sing the notes of a lark, but the plumage betrays the deception.' For myself I would like to see the plumage of Doctor Von Steen."

Balthasar Toledo hesitated. "We're wasting time," he said impatiently.

"To discover the truth is the noblest employment of time," said Mr. Ken.

"More Ling Po?" sneered Toledo.

"Precisely," said the Chinese. "Two or three little questions, Doctor Gimp. Difficult questions. It is but a reasonable precaution."

Toledo scowled at me. "Get on with it," he said shortly.

I racked my mind for questions that would test Doctor Von Steen's authenticity.

"What," I asked, "is a preset guidance system?"

Doctor Von Steen smiled. "It is a guidance-control system for a predetermined path wherein the path is set inside the missile before launching and cannot be adjusted after launching."

"What are its chief disadvantages?"

"Poor accuracy," he said promptly, "due to wind and instrument errors, including gyro drift."

"Describe," said I, "the so-called homing system."

"A homing system," he replied with a shrug, "is a guidance-control system wherein the direction of the missile can be changed after launching by a device in the missile which reacts to some distinguishing characteristic of the target. In the missiles is a seeker which automatically keeps pointed at some property in the target such as light emissions, radio emissions, sound emissions, magnetic features and the like."

"Correct," said I. I propounded several other searching questions, which he answered in a satisfactory manner. Then I resorted to what I conceived to be the ultimate test. It was trickery. It was meaningless jargon. It was a question to which there was no correct answer save a derisive laugh.

"What," I asked, "is the coefficient of the isotope when subjected to the H-power of the gamma ray when passing through the tropopause and entering the ionosphere if noctilucent clouds interpose an obstruction?"

It was sheer nonsense, meaningless, a jumble of words. The eyes of Doctor Von Steen bored into mine with a peculiar intentness. It was as if he willed that thought be transferred from his mind to mine. I glanced at his hands. They were clenched into fists and the knuckles were white.

"Why, Doctor Gimp," he replied smoothly, as if the answer were elementary, "at that altitude the velocity of the cosmic ray nullifies the lateral pressure of the G-layer and results in a maximum concentration of ions." He smiled at me thinly.

"That, Doctor Gimp," he said, "should satisfy you of my knowledge and competence to a degree in which I might even be welcomed as a co-worker in the laboratories of White Sands."

The man was an impostor. He had answered gibberish with gibberish. He was not Doctor Von Steen, Soviet scientist. But, if not, who was he and what was his purpose? What had been his objective in pronouncing my counterfeit electronic brain genuine?

One point made itself evident to a mind accustomed to research and the use of reason: This man who represented himself to be Doctor Von Steen had come with the purpose of deceiving Balthasar Toledo and his accessories. His purpose must be inimical to them. It might not be friendly to me, but it was a thing of which a man of my intelligence must take advantage.

I could lose nothing and might gain some advantage by refusing to unmask him. I nodded my head as if in understanding.

"Doctor Von Steen," said I, "has proved himself to be an electronic scientist of formidable attainments."

The man claiming the identity of Doctor Von Steen relaxed and shrugged.

"I am obligated to Doctor Gimp," he said.

"Satisfied?" Toledo asked of William George Thomas.

"Completely," the fat man replied. "Oh, fully and completely." He narrowed his eyes at me. "I, too," he said, "am not wholly unacquainted with the terminology of electronic science."

OBVIOUSLY then, Mr. Thomas also had detected the imposture and was not exposing it. The man bewildered me. When he first came into the room he had observed placidly that I was in a predicament. It was dawning upon me that he also found himself in a quandary.

"So," asked Toledo, "what is your proposition, William? And what puts you in a position to enforce your demands?"

"After profound consideration," the fat man said in his beautifully modulated voice, "I find I care to offer no dicker whatever. I do not like the climate. It oppresses me." He directed his glance toward me.

"Gentlemen," he said agreeably, "I find that integrity, when wedded to a certain quantity of intelligence, is fatal to the sort of dickering I had in mind. I think I shall withdraw to a more salubrious milieu."

He put his hands on the arms of his chair and heaved himself to his feet. Manuel raised his droopy head and shifted his position.

"Sit down!" commanded Balthasar Toledo.

"But," protested Mr. Thomas mildly, "I have no further interest here."

"We are interested in you!" Toledo snapped.

"As you say," the fat man replied in a tone of resignation.

"So you've no dicker to propose?" Toledo asked ironically. "What changed your mind, William?"

"Why," Thomas said, "this project seems to have reached a point of no return." He seated himself again. "I am a man of business. When I see no chance of profit I move promptly to cut my losses."

"Are we not," asked Mr. Ken, "losing time? Doctor Von Steen has given his opinion. He is ready to take delivery . . . Are you not, doctor?"

"I will take delivery at the border," said the German. "Escort me and this so-valuable object to the border."

"Where," Mr. Ken said suavely, "the money awaits?"

Doctor Von Steen closed the lid of the aluminium container. He reached for my suitcase and fitted the electronic brain in place.

"Ready," he said succinctly.

At that instant came an interruption. The door of the room in which Melinna was confined burst open and Melinna appeared. The Indian woman snatched at her to hold her back, but she eluded the brown hands.

"Why," she demanded angrily, "must I be shut up there with this woman? She sits and scowls! Why——"

She got no further. Bubble Mouth, who was closest to her, swung toward her, scowling, and struck her with the flat of his hand, so that she was thrown against the wall. Melinna uttered a little cry.

At the sight of this wanton mistreatment something seemed to detonate inside my head. The instinct of self-preservation, which had been strong within me, gave way to unreasoning rage. I quite forgot that these men were armed. I was careless of danger to myself. All prudence was swallowed up in such anger as I had known but once before.

On the shelf of the fireplace stood an olla, a large earthenware jar. My hands lifted it, and with all my strength I hurled it at Bubble Mouth. My aim was good. It broke into a hundred pieces against the man's head. I must have been utterly reckless of consequences as I lurched toward Balthasar Toledo with clenched fists.

The scene was unnaturally distinct to me. I was aware of startled expressions, of men standing motionless in surprise. I seem to remember the hand of William George Thomas appearing from the folds of his capacious garments with a small pistol in it. I heard the sound of its discharge and saw a tiny spot appear in the middle of the forehead of Mr. Ken.

As I continued my lunge toward Toledo, I heard the fat man's suave voice saying, as Mr. Ken slumped to the floor, "That is for grossly insulting a helpless guest."

Before Toledo had his gun fully withdrawn, I held his wrist and struck with my other hand—struck with all my strength, reinforced by blind rage. At any instant I expected to suffer the impact of a bullet, but, somehow, I did not seem to care. Perhaps I had become a fatalist in that emergency. I would be killed, anyhow, and my desire was to wreak as much damage upon my enemies as I could before I was stopped.

Toledo fell, but as he did so he had his pistol fully unholstered and fired from the floor. His aim was not good. Before he could fire again, a shot

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sounded from a quite impossible direction. Balthasar screamed in agony. His right hand, holding his weapon, seemed to disappear. The shot had been discharged by Manuel, the Mexican cook, not sleepy now, but erect and alert.

Of the enemy, only the Slav, Otto, remained erect. But he cowered, terrified and harmless. Only Otto and the Communist scientist, Doctor Von Steen.

It was Von Steen who spoke to me. "That'll be plenty, doctor," he said.

In his right hand he held a gun with which he seemed to threaten me. But he was not threatening me. Upon his bony face was a grim smile.

"Quite a diversion you kicked up, Doctor Gimp," he said. "Premature but effective."

I stood now, weak and shaking from reaction. I stared at Doctor Von Steen. I stared at the Mexican, Manuel, whose white teeth were gleaming. His was not the face of a shiftless peon, of a man to suffer without retaliation the kicks of an employer.

Recognition came. It was Senor Iturbe, brother of the Mexican policeman who had been murdered on the Golden State train.

I was bewildered.

"For a scientist," said Doctor Von Steen, "you pack quite a wallop." He shook his head in an admonitory manner. "You might have made a hash of it," he said. Then he smiled more pleasantly and extended his hand. "Maxwell French," he said, "of the FBI. Major Van Tuyl warned us you might be unpredictable."

The outer door burst open, and Major Van Tuyl lunged into the room. He was not alone. Suddenly the place seemed to be full of armed men.

"What goes on?" Van Tuyl demanded. "I heard shots."

"Your Doctor Gimp," said the FBI agent, "lost his temper."

Van Tuyl eyed me dourly. "He does that," he said as though disgusted. "What a hunk of bait he turned out to be!" His thin lips twisted in a saturnine grin. "The doctor's got a grudge against me," he said to the FBI agent. "He thinks I left him in the soup."

"I hold no resentment," I said stiffly. "You could, however, have saved me hours of anxiety."

He shrugged. "The bleating of the kid," he said, "was needed to attract the tiger."

Relief such as I felt was an experience. To have rested for hours under the fear of death, and to have this fear suddenly and unexpectedly removed was a thing to move a man to weakness.

The breaking of tension left me depleted physically and bewildered mentally. I could not realise for a time that the emergency was past.

I saw men giving attention to Balthasar Toledo's shattered hand. I saw Otto in handcuffs. I looked with disbelief at the body of the unctuous Mr. Ken with a tiny, dark hole in his forehead. Bubble Mouth, consciousness recovered, was slumped against the wall with manacles upon his wrists. William George Thomas sat composedly in his chair.

"Gentlemen," he said, "with your permission, I will return to my bed in El Paso. It has been an exhausting, indeed a disappointing evening." He raised himself to his feet. "I have your permission to go?" he asked.

"Settle back in the harness," Major Van Tuyl said. "What makes you think you're in the clear?"

"Logic, sir—logic," said the fat man. "Can you lay your finger upon an action of mine which renders me liable to pains and punishments? Is there a scintilla of evidence which points to me as a wrongdoer? I fancy not."

Mr. French, the agent of the FBI, scowled at him. "We've long had our eyes on you, Thomas."

"But have they seen anything, Mr. French?"

"You're a slippery character."

"Anointed with oil," agreed Mr. Thomas. "May I point out that this evening I have been of some small service? I have paid a debt to Doctor Gimp, who once saved my life."

"We," said French, "could hold you for homicide."

"Now, Mr. French, had I not shot the very dangerous Mr. Ken, he would have shot Doctor Gimp. His gun was in hand, ready to fire. Admitted that I am a devious character. I fish in troubled waters. I profit by the mistakes of others. I did not endeavor to steal your electronic brain. My purpose was to prey upon those who plotted to steal it. No, Mr. French, my character is without a stain."

FRENCH was disgruntled. "We've got nothing on you," he admitted. "But we can make this country too hot for you."

"I am moving myself from it," Mr. Thomas said. "There are other countries, more troubled than this, and less efficient in their vigilance. I have suffered grievous loss of cash and of time. I shall take my fishing equipment and my skill to another land, where trout are easier to take and game wardens are less vigilant." He advanced a step toward me.

"I should like to shake your hand, Doctor Gimp. You have given me a new experience. You have been amusing, sir, but effective. It has been a pleasure to know you."

"I have profited from your acquaintance," I said to him, and took his hand. "Probably you are a bad man, Mr. Thomas, but somehow I like you."

"I shall remember your words with pleasure," he said. And then, "Good night, gentlemen. I have found you frustrating. I hope not to meet you again."

He waddled to the door, turned and waved a pudgy hand, and disappeared into the night.

"There," said Mr. French, "goes a man who could be of great service—if he had picked the right side. But he didn't. I think we are finished here, Major Van Tuyl."

"A complete roundup," the major answered. He grinned at me. "The least we can do for you, Doctor Gimp, is to offer you—and Miss Brown—a ride to El Paso."

"We will be grateful," I assured him.

I looked across the room at Melinna. She was standing, quite composed. But there was a twinkle in her eyes.

"I left home in a hurry," she said to Major Van Tuyl. "I didn't bring a wrap. I wonder if someone could lend me a coat to keep me warm this chilly night?"

Van Tuyl's leathery face distorted itself into a saturnine grimace which was meant for a smile. "We can equip you with a coat," he said. "But I guess you won't need it. Doc Gimp'll volunteer to keep you warm."

Presently Melinna and I found ourselves snug in the back seat of a motor-car, moving briskly through the night toward the city of El Paso. After a time she spoke to me.

"Exhausted, doctor?" she asked in a tone which seemed to me to be odd.

"Quite," I answered.

"You act that way," she observed, "are you too exhausted?"

"For what?" I asked.

"Well," she said, "as a preliminary, to snuggle. After what I've gone through I could use a snuggle."

I placed my arm about her and drew her to me. She did not resist. On the contrary, she responded. Although, I suppose, a kiss is not included in a snuggle technically, I found her lips. Very pleasurable emotions engulfed me, and Melinna seemed equally moved. After an appreciable passage of time she extricated herself from my arms.

"Any further suggestion?" she asked. "Or are we just canoodling?"

For once my mind was able to operate on the same plane as hers. It was encouraging to me.

"My intentions——" said I, when she uttered an angry sound.

"If you say your intentions are honorable I'll scream the roof down."

I was nonplussed. "When," I demanded, "has an offer of marriage been obnoxious to a lady?"

"It's the way you do it," she said. "Give ear, my fatheaded darling, to words of wisdom. No marriage can be worth a hoot on honorable intentions. You can be as honorable as you like, but you've got to conceal it."

"What in heaven's name do you mean?"

"The basis," she said, "of a perfectly scrumptious married life is dishonorable intentions sanctified by wedding vows."

I cogitated upon that saying and found in it notable wisdom.

"When," I asked, "shall we subject ourselves to these essential vows?"

"Well," she said, "before the first of the month."

"Why that date?" I asked.

"Well," she said brazenly, "I've got us a house in White Sands. It'll be vacated on the first, and I put in for it. We really should be married before we move in."

"YOU have taken a house!"

"Certainly," she answered. "I made up my mind some time ago we were going to need one. Me, my dear, I'm a forehanded woman."

I was speechless.

"One thing I insist on," she said peremptorily. "You've got to stay home at nights and keep out of trouble. I can't be annoyed by your chasing spies and going all rash and adventurous on me. What I crave is serenity, science and——"

"Don't you say that other naughty word," I said. And then there followed another interlude of so-called snuggling.

"Do you remember," I asked Melinna, "the day you swung on the gate and ordered me to fight that boy?"

"Right well," she answered contentedly. "That's when I picked you. I knew you'd grow up to be a dandy fighter."

"But you've just admonished me to keep out of fights and adventures."

"Right," she said promptly. "But what girl wants a man that can't deliver a sock if the need for it arises?"

"With you, my dear, as igniter, I fancy that can always be managed," I said.

And then there was no more talk between us until we arrived at our destination.

Her final word to me as we parted was: "Good night, honey. See you at the altar."

And so, after some travail and not altogether unprofitable adventure, I returned to peaceful pursuits.

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